

Dear Journal Editor,

This letter is sent regarding a manuscript submitted to your journal that uses data from the Michigan Genomics Initiative (MGI) biobank. MGI links genetic data with clinical data from patient electronic health records from the Michigan Medicine health system. MGI data and computational tools are freely available to University of Michigan researchers thereby democratizing this cutting-edge resource. MGI data and summary statistics have been used in recent publications appearing in numerous high-level journals, including *Nature Genetics*, *American Journal of Human Genetics*, *PLoS Genetics*, and *Cell Genomics*.

We recognize the importance of open science, including the ability to reproduce published results, and are deeply committed to these principles. Thus, we encourage researchers using MGI data to share aggregate-level data and summary statistics generated as part of their analyses. Examples include the effect sizes, their standard errors, and p-values for all variants tested as part of a genome-wide association study (GWAS). Indeed, we already share many such summary statistics through an interactive Pheweb online tool (<https://pheweb.org/MGI/>). Sharing aggregate data and association results allows researchers external to the University of Michigan to leverage MGI, for example by replicating findings in their datasets or meta-analysis between datasets, without risking the confidentiality of MGI participants.

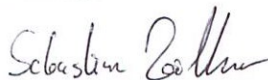
We have a legal and ethical responsibility to protect the privacy and confidentiality of patients. MGI data differs from typical study data in that a very large number of disease traits are associated with each individual, increasing the risk to the participants to reveal medical information in an unforeseen manner. As we consider it to be our responsibility to prevent potential discrimination and misuse of the genetic data, it is the policy of Michigan Medicine that neither MGI individual-level genetic nor clinical data can be publicly shared. We feel that this compromise of sharing aggregate-level data and protecting individual-level data enables the creation of large meta-analyses and open science while encouraging patient participation through trust and respect.

With this approach, we hope to maximize the positive impact of our data resource while protecting our participants. We hope these policies allow you to consider the submitted article for publication in your journal.

Sincerely,



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