

Building a Pan-Canadian Real World Health Data Network

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Background

In December 2017 the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) issued a request for proposals to develop a pan-Canadian health data platform. This platform will enable cross-jurisdictional research by facilitating the use of rich provincial and national data and ensure engagement with patients and specific populations including Indigenous partners. Academics and policy makers from across Canada operating under the banner of the Pan-Canadian Real-World Health Data Network (PRHDN) have joined forces to address this call.

Objectives

Create national infrastructure that is built once then made available for research, benchmarking, performance monitoring, multi-jurisdictional evaluations and inter-jurisdictional comparisons to address pressing health and social policy problems in Canada.

Methods

Our approach will address several issues including creating significant efficiencies in data access, streamlining cross provincial/territorial ethics and access approvals, establishing standards for data and methods harmonization and providing innovative and privacy-conscious solutions to data access and use. The presentation will focus on the plan to create harmonized common data, algorithms and analytic protocols, and link administrative data to electronic medical records and clinical trials to create an integrated and documented infrastructure for pan-Canadian studies. Comparisons to PopMedNet and the Sentinel Initiative in the US will be made.

Conclusion

Provincial centres across Canada hold rich sources of health and social data that are linkable at the person-level. With the exception of standardized data managed by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), these data are often not comparable from one province to another, thereby limiting use to single-province studies. There is growing interest in Canada in creating an environment that would enable cross-jurisdictional data sharing and analysis' and in sharing experiences to make effective use of linkable administrative data.

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