



On 23 May 2015, the CPME Board adopted the “CPME response to the WMA public consultation on the ‘WMA Declaration on ethical considerations regarding health databases and biobanks’” (CPME 2015/039 Final)

**CPME response to the WMA public consultation on the
‘WMA Declaration on ethical considerations regarding health databases and biobanks’
(CPME 2015/039 Final)**

The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)¹ represents national medical associations across Europe. We are committed to contributing the medical profession’s point of view to EU and European policy-making through pro-active cooperation on a wide range of health and healthcare related issues.

Dear Dr Deau,
Dear Dr Snaedal,
Dear Dr Kloiber,

We thank the World Medical Association for the initiative to draft a declaration addressing ethical considerations on health databases and biobanks. We welcome in particular the clarification proposed as to what governance structure should apply when a broad consent is sought for multiple use of health information.

The WMA draft Declaration comes at an appropriate time: developments in information technologies advance at a very rapid pace and constitute new challenges to existing human rights, in particular the right to privacy and the right to the protection of personal data. Among the various sectors impacted by the ‘data revolution’, the healthcare sector proves to be a very sensitive one. Health data reveals the most intimate and private information of individuals, hence a safe and ethically sound use of this information is all the more important.

At European level, the revision of Directive 1995/46/EC on the protection of personal data and the Commission green paper on mHealth trigger important discussions about the use of health data for research purposes. Some will argue that the processing of massive amounts of health data and of human material, through large scale data repositories and biobanks, entails enormous potentials for medical research. Others will warn against the risks of abuse, such as political and commercial abuses.

¹ CPME is registered in the Transparency Register with the ID number 9276943405-41.

In order to find the right balance between both views, i.e. to ensure optimal use of health information and at the same time guarantee medical confidentiality and patient's autonomy, it is crucial that medical doctors initiate a reflection process at the appropriate level to discuss the ethical implications of these new technologies. Considering its worldwide representativity and its proven expertise to define ethical standards for medical practice, we believe the WMA is the most appropriate arena for this issue to be addressed.

National Medical Associations will surely comment on the draft Declaration put forward for public consultation. CPME will follow with great attention the drafting developments, and will be most happy to advocate for the implementation of the Declaration when endorsed, towards the relevant institutions and policy-makers.

Sincerely,

Dr Katrín Fjeldsted
CPME President



Dr Konstanty Radziwill
CPME Immediate Past President
Chair of the eHealth Working group



RA Birgit Beger
CPME Secretary General

