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Health data governance is at the heart of population health research. The Oxford RECOVERY trial (the world's largest clinical trial of treatment for COVID-19) and the international trial of the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine have highlighted the importance of data governance for the success of academic research during a pandemic. At the Nuffield Department of Population Health, we encourage strong data governance (covering the collection, storage, sharing, and analysis of data) to maximise the value of our studies. However, such governance must occur in the context of technical, regulatory and policy frameworks on health data, which are often developed at a national level.

As such, we are supportive of efforts of WHO and others to enhance international collaboration on data governance.

In academia, where collaborations between institutions (and researchers) in different countries can often last several decades, we have found that strong data governance depends crucially on mutual respect, transparency, and trust.