

Global impact of UK health data resource highlighted in newly published paper

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New analysis shows Clinical Practice Research Datalink has supported groundbreaking medical research across 29 countries with close to 3,800 published studies.

The Clinical Practice Research Datalink (CPRD), run by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), has contributed to nearly 3,800 peer-reviewed research publications since 1988, according to a new scientometric analysis published in the European Journal of Epidemiology.

The study, conducted by researchers at the University of Oxford and the MHRA's CPRD team (Eleanor Axson, Maria Rahman and Susan Hodgson), reveals the substantial global impact of this UK-based health data resource in advancing medical knowledge, improving patient safety and informing healthcare policy.

Key findings include:

- 3,779 peer-reviewed publications have used CPRD data between 1988 and 2024
- Research output has grown at an average annual rate of 16.37%
- Researchers from 29 countries have used CPRD data, with the UK, United States and Canada as leading contributors
- Over 80% of recent studies have used primary care records linked with hospital, mortality or other health datasets, demonstrating the value of connected health data

CPRD is a not-for-profit government research service that provides anonymised patient data from GP practices across the UK. The database currently holds records for over 71 million patients, supporting research that has informed drug safety decisions, clinical guidelines and public health policy.

Eleanor Axson, co-author and Senior Researcher in the MHRA's CPRD team, said:

These findings show the UK is a global leader in health data research. This analysis confirms that researchers from 29 countries are using this resource to answer important questions about drug safety and patient outcomes. This international collaboration strengthens our ability to protect public health, both here in the UK and around the world.

The research highlights that studies using CPRD data have been published in more than 600 peer-reviewed journals, with BMJ Open and Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety among the most

frequent outlets. Seven UK universities rank among the top ten most productive research institutions using CPRD data.

Notes to editors

1. The Clinical Practice Research Datalink (CPRD) is jointly sponsored by the MHRA and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR).
2. CPRD comprises two primary care databases: CPRD GOLD (established 1987) and CPRD Aurum (launched 2017), with linkages to hospital records, mortality data and other health datasets.
3. The full study, "Academic impact and research data utilisation of the clinical practice research datalink: scientometric analyses," is published in the European Journal of Epidemiology.
4. For more information about CPRD, visit: www.cprd.com
5. The MHRA is an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care.
6. For media enquiries, please contact the newscentre@mhra.gov.uk, or call on 020 3080 7651.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/global-impact-of-uk-health-data-resource-highlighted-in-newly-published-paper>