

An open-access journal for health data linkage research?

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Health research using linked data presents many methodological and technical challenges. These include developing definitions for key indicators and concepts; selecting appropriate denominators; assessing the quality of routinely collected data and their linkages; addressing biases caused by unlinked records; and applicability of traditional statistical techniques to very large data sets. Studies of these issues can be hard to publish in peer-reviewed journals, and so there is little incentive to write them up. Those that are published often appear in disease-specific journals that may not regularly be scanned by data linkage researchers. Consequently, there is limited sharing of this type of knowledge.

Establishment of a Biomed Central (or other open-access) journal specific to linked data studies could help to address this problem, and increase research productivity. Potentially, such a journal would allow sharing of much more than traditional peer-reviewed research articles – categories of “articles” could include computer code, glossaries and data dictionaries, even data sets themselves.

This presentation will discuss the practical issues, and costs, involved in establishing such a journal, and assess support for taking this proposal forward.