

*In this feature, our team provides you with an overview of the most recent publications in the field of bioethics, with a particular focus on contributions coming from (or having relevance for) Switzerland.*

*Buona lettura! Bonne lecture ! Viel Spass beim Lesen! Enjoy the reading!*

*The editors: Andrea Martani, Maddalena Favaretto, and Felix Pageau*

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## DIGITAL ETHICS



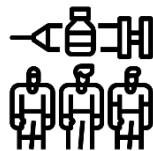
### **“Ethics review of big data research: What should stay and what should be reformed?”**

In this publication, the authors critically reflect on the role of ethics review committees (ERC) in big data research. They also propose how ERC should better tackle challenges in this field.

To do so, the authors outline ERC current weaknesses and differentiate between persistent ones (unrelated to big data research) and novel ones (caused by big data research). Amongst the persistent weaknesses, there are a lack transparency and a focus on individuals rather than the collective. The novel ones include the avoidance of ethics review in non-traditional institutions (e.g. private corporations or citizen science initiatives) that often conduct big data research; and the limited capacity of ERC to foresee some risks associated to big data research due to the lack of expertise. After showing current limitations, the authors conclude by suggesting reforms to improve ERC capacity to evaluate big data research. Importantly, they underline the need to involve other stakeholders in the assessment of such research, including the public and external experts in data analytics.

Ferretti, A., Ienca, M., Sheehan, M. et al. Ethics review of big data research: What should stay and what should be reformed? *BMC Med Ethics* 22, 51 (2021). doi: [10.1186/s12910-021-00616-4](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12910-021-00616-4)

## PUBLIC HEALTH ETHICS



### **“Motivations and Limits for COVID-19 Policy Compliance in Germany and Switzerland”**

What motivated compliance to COVID-19 restrictions imposed during the first wave in Switzerland and Germany? This study tries to answer this important question by presenting the findings of an interview-based qualitative study in both countries. A total of almost 80 participants were included. The study results bring to light various reasons justifying compliance with or opposition to restrictions. For example, reasons related to social cohesion, and individual needs are exposed. Many participants express also that rules were to be followed depending on consequences (linked to their actions and those of others). Another important element in regard to adherence to rules was the general trust in institution

combined with personal risk assessments. These are in turn used to determine if exceptions to the rule are acceptable. The authors finally outline how the study confirms the importance of solidarity within the population and its influence on rule-compliance.

Zimmermann BM, Fiske A, McLennan S, Sierawska A, Hangel N, Buyx A. Motivations and Limits for COVID-19 Policy Compliance in Germany and Switzerland. *Int J Health Policy Manag.* 2021 Apr 21. doi: 10.34172/ijhpm.2021.30