

Marcelo Corrales Compagnucci, Mark Fenwick (eds.): *International Transfers of Health Data: A Global Perspective*. Springer Nature, 2025, 263 p.

Health data occupies a distinctive position within data protection law. It is widely recognised as a special category of personal data, subject to heightened legal safeguards because of its sensitivity, its link to human dignity, and its potential for serious harm if misused. Against this background, *International Transfers of Health Data: A Global Perspective* addresses a topic of growing importance: how legal systems manage the cross-border movement of health data in an increasingly globalised and data-driven healthcare environment.

The volume's central contribution lies in its global outlook. Rather than focusing narrowly on European or transatlantic debates, the editors assemble contributions covering a wide range of jurisdictions, including the European Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, Asia, Africa and Latin America. This comparative approach is particularly valuable in the context of health data, where regulatory responses are shaped not only by privacy law, but also by public health priorities, technological capacity and ethical norms. The book makes clear that international health data transfers cannot be understood through a single regulatory model.

Several chapters provide careful analysis of how existing transfer mechanisms operate in the health sector, including standard contractual clauses and binding corporate rules under the GDPR. These discussions are grounded in current regulatory developments and demonstrate how transfer law interacts with the specific risks associated with medical and research data. The contributors succeed in showing that health data transfers raise distinct challenges compared to other forms of personal data, especially when issues of patient trust, medical confidentiality and public health emergencies are taken into account. One of the book's strengths is its refusal to treat health data transfers as a purely technical compliance issue. Many chapters situate legal rules within broader ethical and societal considerations, such as data sharing for medical research, cross-border clinical trials and global health cooperation. This broader framing reinforces the idea that overly rigid or fragmented transfer regimes may undermine legitimate public interests if not carefully designed.

That said, the volume is not without limitations. As with many edited collections, the depth and focus of individual chapters varies. Some contributions read primarily as descriptive surveys of national law, with limited engagement with the comparative or global themes suggested by the book's title. A stronger editorial synthesis drawing clearer connections between chapters would have improved coherence. In addition, practitioners may find that the book offers more conceptual guidance than practical instruction, particularly for institutions seeking detailed operational advice on implementing health data transfer mechanisms.

Despite these reservations, *International Transfers of Health Data: A Global Perspective* makes a timely and important contribution to the literature. Its focus on health data as a special and sensitive category sets it apart from more general works on international data transfers. For scholars, policymakers and legally informed practitioners, the book provides a valuable framework for understanding why health data requires distinct regulatory attention and how different legal systems are responding to that challenge. For readers of *The Lawyer Quarterly*, this volume offers a thoughtful and well-informed examination of one of the most complex areas of modern data protection law. It underscores that the future of international health data transfers will depend not only on legal mechanisms, but on the ability of regulatory systems to balance privacy, innovation and public health in a global context.

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