

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/embrace-ethics>

Because any innovation will touch multiple stakeholders with conflicting needs, it's important to embrace ethical quandaries at the outset. Cala Health founder and chief scientific officer Kate Rosenbluth explains how thinking through the ethics of digital patient data helped the team build a more robust and patient-centric product and infrastructure



Transcript

Great, so the second what is to embrace ethics and to embrace it early and often.. And I love this cartoon.. So you can see here someone sitting in a car saying, "If these idiots would just take the bus "I could be home by now." But every single person is saying that so everyone sits in traffic.. Clearly the best solution here would be to put everyone on a bus and it might mean that they don't each get to be in their own private car but they would all get where they're going.. And when you look at, you know, questions like this kind of refers back to the moral philosophy of what people call the tragedy of the commons, which is the idea of the commons being a furnished pasture with you have got cows and if everyone has their cow, if everyone's cows go and eat the grass there is no more grass and no one can have cows.. And so there's a ton of, you know, different ethical theory built around the economics of this, the politics of this, the regulation of this and it's really the idea of, for example, when you have conflict through conflicting needs of different stakeholders how do you address that? And why I encourage, you know, as you're thinking about your solutions to embrace all of the ethical quandaries early on is that the more time that you have to kind of see your way through that you can do things like balance sort of ethical conflict, conflicting needs.. So as an example for us, sort of the modern day pasture for us, is digital health data and data around patients.. And a great example I think just of, you know, the type of ethical topics that we have always focused on from very early on in the company, long before we were commercial, was things like how do you balance the rights of the individual against the rights of the group? So let's say as an individual person we're collecting, cloud data on usage on efficacy that really empowers a beautiful experience for the patients, cost-effectiveness for the healthcare system et cetera but it also raises a lot of questions.. Because arguably as an individual you should own your data, you should have, you know, it be protected privacy wise, no one should be able to sell your data and at the same time let's say that you are, you know, a citizen who has a rare genetic disease.. And if everyone else was required to share their data then you would be able to discover the solution to your rare genetic disease..

If all of the treatment data, genetics data, you know, of everyone around you were pooled together then, you know, you would be able to discover that.. And I think that that's a good example of where, you know, we recognized early on that we had to be very careful about how we thought about things like an individual's right to their data and the right of another person to actually learn what therapy works best for them.. So then we could do things like actually taking the technology solutions, you know talking about another unmet need, to then get very proactive about how do we build out the technologies that actually let us sort of have our cake and eat it to? That let us, you know, provide an incredibly data secure environment for patients and set up the infrastructure that allows us to learn, you know, one patient's type of tremor, what works for them and then actually provide that as advice to another patient to help them, you know, get the most benefit from therapy.. So I would just say as you're going through thinking of solutions always, you know, think about what are some of the ethical questions that will come up around this.. You know, dig in on them and learn about them and I sometimes think that this is an area that almost gets a little bit overlooked.. So, embrace ethics...