

Editor's Note:**Regarding the South African Medical Association's withdrawal from the revision of the "WMA Declaration of Taipei"****Chieko Kurihara****Editor-in-Chief, *Clinical Evaluation***

Following supply chain disruptions caused by a series of violations of GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice) standards by generic drug companies¹, the severe shortage of petrochemical-based medical supplies due to the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz has become an urgent threat to patients' lives in Japan². The threat of "war" directly impacts medical settings. Relaxing Japan's strict arms export ban undermines its war-renouncing Peace Constitution³.

The World Medical Association (WMA) commenced the revision process for *the Declaration of Taipei on Ethical Considerations regarding Health Databases and Biobanks*⁴ in April 2025⁵. However, the South African Medical Association (SAMA) has formally announced its refusal to participate, due to the fact that the Israel Medical Association (IMA) currently chairs the workgroup^{6,7}. This withdrawal is particularly serious given that SAMA played a pivotal role in the previous 2016 revision, including the significant proposal to include the principle of Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs)⁸.

Their decision is rooted in the fact that the South African government has filed a case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), alleging that the attacks on Gaza constitute "genocide"^{9,10}. Consequently, SAMA has suspended all official relations with the IMA^{6,7}. SAMA severely criticizes the IMA for aligning its position with the Israeli government⁶—which justifies attacks that have devastated medical facilities across Gaza¹¹, a practice widely condemned as "healthocide"^{12,13}, as the "neutralization of terrorist hubs"—viewing such a stance as a betrayal of fundamental medical ethical principles. Hence, the accountability of both the IMA and the WMA is being called into question.

Within the debates surrounding the revision of the Declaration of Taipei, voices from the Global South and indigenous communities have repeatedly argued that their biological samples and data are being harvested without appropriate benefit-sharing¹⁴. The Nagoya Protocol¹⁵ under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)¹⁶ mandates that "benefit-sharing"¹⁷ of results be provided by the "users" (public institutions and companies in industrialized countries) of genetic resources of flora, fauna, and microorganisms, etc. from the provider countries. While the CBD does not apply to human genetic resources (HGR), several Latin American nations have applied the Nagoya Protocol's principle of benefit-sharing to humans through their domestic legislation and bioethical principles¹⁸. In Latin America, the rich genetic resources of indigenous peoples have become targets for precision

medicine¹⁹ by global pharmaceutical companies and academic institutions; however, the failure to fulfill benefit-sharing obligations is denounced as "biocolonialism" or "biopiracy"²⁰. Meanwhile, Africa—possessing the most diverse genetic resources as the cradle of humanity²¹—is advancing similar legal frameworks based on a sovereign-rights approach.

In this context, the United States, related to a 2025 Executive Order²², is pressuring African nations into new negotiations that condition medical aid on preferential access to critical mineral resources and the transfer of pathogen and patient data^{23,24}. This shift, which attempts to replace traditional international humanitarian medical assistance with bilateral "deals" directly linked to U.S. national interests, has met with fierce opposition from African countries. The data sought by the U.S. serves not only as a key for AI-driven drug discovery and personalized medicine but also carries strategic intentions for national security, such as countering the development of biological weapons that could target specific genetic populations via AI-assisted technologies²⁵. Japan bears an indelible legacy: trading human experimentation data to the U.S. after World War II in exchange for immunity²⁶.

To prevent health databases and biobanks—which ought to be utilized for the well-being of individuals and all humanity—from being exposed to international power games and political misuse, a global agreement based on bioethical principles is urgently required.

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