

Barts Health takes ‘giant step’ for medical research with Sectra

Previously untapped insights from large volumes of anonymised diagnostic images could enable ground-breaking research and medical innovations needed to enhance patient care, following a first of its kind technology deployment in the NHS.

Barts Health NHS Trust, which serves one of the largest and most diverse patient populations in the country, has become the first healthcare provider in the NHS to implement Anonymise and Export from medical imaging IT company Sectra. As part of wider activity, it means that researchers will be empowered to shed new light on diseases, tailor treatments, and potentially inform the next generation of healthcare AI.

Anonymise and Export has been implemented within the trust’s existing Sectra enterprise imaging solution, a system widely used by NHS diagnosticians to analyse patient scans. The cutting-edge addition will allow for the seamless export of medical images to a secure data environment, with patient identifiers automatically removed. This removes a previously manually intensive process, releasing time for busy NHS teams, whilst addressing crucial privacy safeguards, and dramatically expanding research possibilities.

The de-identified imaging data will be integrated into the new Barts Health Data Platform (BHDP), which was formally launched in April 2025. The platform brings together different types of health information — such as scans, health records, and lab results — into one secure system that researchers can apply to use.

Steven Newhouse, deputy chief information officer for Barts Health NHS Trust, said: “We are now able to provide researchers and clinicians with access to health and imaging data at a scale we’ve not offered before. With robust safeguards in place, this development supports more efficient, secure research and marks meaningful progress in advancing medical innovation and understanding of disease.”

Deployed with the support of Sectra and the NIHR Barts Biomedical Research Centre, Sectra Anonymise and Export opens new avenues for medical research, paving the way for more comprehensive and insightful studies.

Professor Sir Mark Caulfield, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Queen Mary University of London, said: “The NIHR Barts Biomedical Research Centre is delighted to have enabled this groundbreaking advancement in access to medical imaging for research. This system represents a pivotal moment in our field — a true game-changer that unlocks the potential of big data while steadfastly protecting patient privacy. This is an exhilarating time of transformation, and I am proud to be part of this innovative journey.”

Sarah Jensen, chief information officer for Barts Health NHS Trust, added: “The diversity and sheer volume of data being integrated means a significant leap forward in our healthcare data research capabilities. NHS professionals are under pressure as they work to deliver the best possible care for patients. Academics and researchers in continual pursuit of medical advancements, can play a key role delivering innovations urgently needed.

“Now, we can securely and safely provide the data they need on a scale not previously possible, whilst safeguarding confidentiality, and without our busy NHS teams being asked to spend time manually removing identifiable information. The possibilities are immense.”

The technological deployment sets the stage for sophisticated AI-powered analysis of medical images. By leveraging advanced pattern recognition algorithms, that are available within the Azure

Cloud that hosts the BHDP, researchers will be able to uncover hidden insights and draw more nuanced conclusions from the extensive dataset.

Jane Rendall, UK and Ireland managing director for Sectra, said: “Healthcare professionals at Barts Health have been at the forefront of innovation with imaging technology for many years – using our platform to diagnose and inform care for a great many patients across East London. This latest initiative takes that innovation to another level, securely and safely harnessing imaging data in ways that could radically change how care is delivered. I look forward to seeing the impact emerge for healthcare and patients alike.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

Researchers interested in accessing this groundbreaking resource are encouraged to visit <https://data.bartshealth.nhs.uk> for more information on how to request access to this transformative dataset.

About Barts Health NHS Trust

Barts Health NHS Trust is one of the largest NHS trusts in the UK, providing healthcare services to over 2.5 million people across East London and beyond. The Trust runs five hospitals – The Royal London, St Bartholomew’s, Whipps Cross, Newham, and Mile End – and is known for its excellence in specialist care, teaching, and research. Working in partnership with local communities and academic institutions, Barts Health is committed to delivering high-quality, inclusive, and patient-centred care.

About Sectra

With over 30 years of innovation and more than 2,500 sites managing 152 million annual imaging exams, Sectra is a leading provider to health systems. Sectra offers an enterprise imaging solution that provides a unified strategy for all imaging needs while lowering operational costs. The scalable and modular solution, with a VNA at its core, allows healthcare providers to grow from ology to ology and from enterprise to enterprise. Visit Sectra’s website to read more about Sectra and why it’s top-ranked in '[Best in KLAS](#)'.