Biography

Dr. Kadija Ferryman is a cultural anthropologist whose research examines how cultural and moral values are embedded in digital health information, social influences on health, and the ethics of digital health research. She earned a BA in Anthropology from Yale University, and a PhD in Anthropology from The New School for Social Research. Before completing her PhD, she was a policy researcher at the Urban Institute where she studied how housing and neighborhoods impact well-being, specifically the effects of public housing redevelopment on children, families, and older adults. She has published research in journals such as Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, European Journal of Human Genetics, and Genetics in Medicine. She is currently a Postdoctoral Scholar at the Data & Society Research Institute.

Abstract

“Precision medicine” is a growing field that aims to use multiple data sources to tailor medical care to individuals. From incorporating genetic information to using data from electronic medical records, precision medicine has the potential to transform healthcare and medical research. Precision medicine has strong support in multiple sectors, including the government’s Precision Medicine Initiative, as well as industry-led efforts to collect and analyze volumes of health data.

The Fairness in Precision Medicine Project aims to move past the rhetorics of promise in precision medicine to critically assess the potential for bias and discrimination in health data collection, sharing, and interpretation. To that end, this project maps the network of stakeholders in precision medicine, including researchers, health care providers, clinicians, and data analysts. The project also identifies vulnerabilities in the ecosystem that could lead to discriminatory outcomes, whether they might emerge as a by-product of implicit and explicit values, data quality, algorithmic models, or organizational decision-making.