Navigating the Impact of Claims Data Volatility on Biopharma

Speakers

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Biopharma companies depend on real-world data (RWD) to make critical decisions. But cyber threats, evolving regulations, supply chain disruptions and legacy systems have made this foundation increasingly unstable. Claims data volatility is no longer an isolated inconvenience; it is an industry-wide operational and financial challenge that can ultimately impact patients.

In a sponsored webinar for BioPharma Dive, Olivia vonNieda and Monica Tabrizi discuss new survey findings, emerging sources of disruption and proactive strategies to build resilience into the biopharma data ecosystem. Their discussion highlights the magnitude of the problem and the urgent need for better vendor communication, diversified data sources and stronger internal controls.

Navigating the Impact of Claims Data Volatility on Biopharma

To better understand the issue of data volatility and its impacts, McKesson Compile partnered with Cue Insights to survey 75 biopharma commercial leaders. The results reveal a system under strain and found 68 percent of respondents had experienced data volatility in the previous year. Among those impacted:

- 73 percent reported false insights, often leading to changes in business decisions.

- 92 percent were forced to reanalyze data.

- 61 percent found new claims vendors or supplemented existing data sources.

- Most companies spent 4 to 7 months identifying, sourcing, and preparing new claims data for use.

Data disruption refers to sudden or sustained changes in the availability, completeness, or reliability of healthcare claims data, typically caused by upstream events such as cyber incidents, clearinghouse outages, feed changes, or processing delays. These disruptions often appear as missing claims, unexpected volume shifts, or inconsistencies across time or data sources, breaking continuity in longitudinal analysis.

The survey revealed an equally concerning finding: Over half of respondents discovered data disruptions on their own, usually while analyzing the data, which means that less than half were notified by their data vendors at all. This lack of transparency compounds both operational and human challenges with 98 % of respondents who experienced volatility reporting that their job became more stressful.

Understanding Industry Implications

Claims data volatility erodes trust across the biopharma ecosystem and introduces widespread inefficiency. Commercial teams lose confidence in data vendors and remediation efforts require significant time, investment and resources. In a climate of economic and political uncertainty, the cost of inaccurate insights is higher than ever.

Tabrizi and vonNieda underscored the stakes: Data disruptions can also impact patients by delaying therapy access, misdirect resources or lead to flawed interpretations of disease burden. Biopharma companies cannot afford repeated cycles of reanalysis when timely, reliable insights are essential to serving providers and patients.

The Impact of a Cyberattack

In the webinar, vonNieda highlighted how a major cyber incident can disrupt the healthcare industry and expose the fragility of its interconnected data infrastructure. Nationwide interruptions to claims processing nationwide left providers without reimbursement and patients uncertain about care costs. The secondary effects rippled far beyond revenue cycle operations. Many biopharma teams rely on data that flows through clearinghouses and revenue cycle platforms and when one node fails, a backlog forms across the entire ecosystem.

To illustrate the impact, vonNieda compared healthcare data to a bloodstream:

- Claims and EHR data act like electrolytes and proteins, stabilizing core functions such as billing, care coordination and decision-making.

- RWE and patient-reported outcomes operate like hormones, signaling changes across the network.

- Imaging and genomic data resemble specialized cells delivering targeted insights.

- A disruption is akin to a clot: it starves critical functions downstream and delays patient care.

Use Cases Most Vulnerable to Volatility

Tabrizi and vonNieda identified several high-impact areas where data instability creates the greatest risks.

1. Payer Dynamics Analysis

Companies rely on claims data to understand how Medicare, commercial insurers and providers interact. When data is disrupted, reimbursement modeling, market access planning and financial forecasting become unreliable.

2. Market Sizing

Market sizing informs manufacturing, strategy, resource allocation and launch readiness. vonNieda shared the example of a 2010 product launch that experienced severe drug shortages because demand was underestimated. Patients already on therapy were unable to continue treatment, demonstrating the value of accurate market sizing pre-launch.

3. Referral Analysis

Understanding how patients move from primary care to specialists is essential for identifying intervention points. Disruptions in referral analysis can result in misallocated resources, missed provider touchpoints and delays in patients receiving the right therapies.

Building a Resilient Data Strategy

The speakers outlined several strategies biopharma teams can adopt to mitigate the risk of volatility.

Choose Transparent, Proactive Vendors: Vendor communication is critical. Companies should seek partners that clearly communicate outages, disruptions and expected timelines.

"Trust but Verify" with Automatic Monitoring: Teams should implement automated checks to flag abnormalities or missing data whether they are caused by real-world events or vendor-level disruptions.

Diversify Data Types: Relying on a single type of data can leave companies exposed. The combination of open and closed claims data creates a safety net. If one channel is disrupted, the other can help fill gaps.

Use Statistical Techniques to Manage Breaks: A combination of time-series analysis, change-point detection, missing data imputation, Bayesian methods and data-fusion techniques can help identify anomalies early and preserve analytical integrity.

Picking the Right Partner

The HIPAA Journal reported 725 data breaches of 500 or more records reported in 2024, making due diligence non-negotiable. While evaluating potential data partners, ask questions such as:

- What proactive steps do you take during a cyberattack?

- What is your communication strategy and timeline?

Evaluations should be ongoing, not just during onboarding. Also, responsiveness to routine inquiries can be a strong predictor of how vendors will behave in a crisis.

McKesson Compile takes several steps to mitigate the impact of data disruptions:

- Immediate impact evaluation when volatility occurs

- Real-time communication via customer portal notifications and emails

- Dedicated sourcing specialists who work diligently to restore affect data

- Continuous efforts to expand data coverage and diversify sources

- Support from real-world data analytics experts to address gaps and ensure continuity of insights

Conclusion

Claims data volatility is not a temporary challenge; it is an ongoing reality that requires proactive planning, diversified data sources and strong vendor accountability. As cyber threats increase and automated analytics scale, biopharma companies must strengthen their data foundations to ensure sound decision-making and safeguard patient access to needed therapies.

Watch the webinar ▶

About McKesson Compile

McKesson Compile helps life sciences companies develop and commercialize life-saving innovations by providing analytics-ready healthcare data products and tailored intelligence. We offer extensive in-house life science expertise and enable customers to move faster and remove friction through premium customer service.

We take a proactive approach to data volatility, combining transparency and communication, rigorous data validation, and responsive customer support to help biopharma companies make informed decisions even amid disruptions in real-world claims data. Additionally, the footprint of an industry-leading organization like McKesson makes it possible to offer our customers a more complete picture of the healthcare ecosystem.

For more information on how to optimize your strategy with the right data, visit mckessoncompile.com.

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