

# Unifying Healthcare Through MDM: Paving the Way for Precision Medicine and Population Health

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**Abstract:** *As healthcare systems generate increasingly complex datasets, from EHRs and genomic profiles to social and behavioral determinants, the need for an integrated, reliable data infrastructure has never been greater. This paper explores the critical role of Master Data Management (MDM) in addressing fragmentation and inconsistency in healthcare data, and its strategic application in advancing both precision medicine and population health. Through a synthesis of peer-reviewed research, industry case studies, and regulatory frameworks, the study demonstrates how MDM enables accurate patient identity resolution, data standardization, and semantic interoperability. These capabilities support the creation of unified patient records, which serve as the foundation for individualized treatment plans, chronic disease surveillance, and targeted public health interventions. The findings underscore MDM's transition from a backend data utility to a strategic enabler of personalized and population-wide care.*

**Keywords:** master data management (MDM), healthcare, patient 360-degree view, precision medicine, population health

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid digitalization of healthcare has resulted in unprecedented volumes of data generated from electronic health records (EHRs), wearables, diagnostic imaging, genomics, claims data, and patient-reported outcomes. The healthcare sector saw an increase from 153 exabytes in 2013 to over 2,314 exabytes in 2020, with projections estimating that healthcare will comprise 30% of global data by 2025 [1]. The richness of these data holds immense potential to improve care, but it also presents significant challenges in terms of integration, quality, and accessibility. Healthcare data remains notoriously siloed. Hospitals, clinics, laboratories, insurance payers, and public health agencies often maintain separate databases that cannot readily communicate. This fragmentation leads to duplicated efforts and critical information gaps. In the U.S., despite policy efforts, over 2,000 government health datasets across federal, state, and local levels have historically been created and analysed in isolation, limiting their utility for public health [2]. These disconnected systems and siloed data impair the quality of care, slow decision-making, and raise operational costs.

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Master Data Management (MDM) has emerged as a pivotal discipline to address these problems by establishing a single source of truth for core entities (patients, providers, etc.) across disparate systems. MDM in healthcare refers to the strategies and technologies used to create a unified, accurate, and consistent view of critical data. It encompasses data integration, cleansing, de-duplication, standardization, and governance. In essence, Master Data Management is an information management system that pulls data together into one centralized ‘source of truth.’ It eliminates data silos so that the right people can access the right data at the right time [3]. By reconciling variations and resolving duplicates (for example, linking records for the same patient across different facilities), MDM ensures that every stakeholder – clinicians, administrators, researchers, and patients – is referencing the same reliable information.

In the context of precision medicine, MDM is essential for integrating and aligning diverse datasets—clinical records, genomic profiles, environmental exposures, and lifestyle data—to inform individualized treatment plans. Without the data consistency and linkage that MDM provides, such personalized care remains difficult to implement at scale. On the population health front, MDM allows organizations to analyse patient groups across geographies and demographics. It facilitates the identification of high-risk populations, supports the monitoring of chronic disease trends, and informs targeted interventions. By linking traditional clinical records with data on social and behavioural determinants, MDM also enables a more nuanced understanding of health disparities and care access gaps. This paper examines the evolving role of MDM in healthcare, highlighting its strategic importance in driving both individualized care and broader public health outcomes. Drawing on current examples, regulatory frameworks, and leading practices, it argues that MDM is no longer a technical convenience—it is a critical asset for delivering data-driven, patient-centered, and equitable healthcare.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative, integrative research methodology to examine the role of Master Data Management (MDM) in advancing healthcare objectives, with particular emphasis on precision medicine and population health. The analysis was grounded in secondary research using triangulated sources, including peer-reviewed academic literature, regulatory documentation, and industry white papers. The author’s extensive expertise in implementing enterprise MDM solutions in healthcare further enhanced the research analysis and findings. Peer-reviewed journals such as PLOS Digital Health [4], and BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making [5], were reviewed to understand academic perspectives on MDM’s impact on healthcare interoperability, patient identity resolution, and ethical data stewardship. Additionally, industry white papers and case studies from leading technology vendors—including Informatica [6], Semarchy [3], Verato [7], 4medica [8], and Innovaccer [9]—provided insights into real-world MDM implementations and outcomes in U.S. healthcare systems. Regulatory frameworks and federal initiatives such as TEFCA [10], the 21st Century Cures Act [10], and HIPAA [10] were referenced to evaluate MDM’s role in achieving data compliance and interoperability mandates.

Below are some notable statistics that were collected during the research.

Table 1: Key Healthcare/MDM Statistics

<b>Metric/Statistic</b>	<b>Value/Percentage</b>	<b>Source</b>
Projected share of global data by healthcare in 2025	30%	[1]
The prevalence of duplicate records in most hospitals	20%	[7]
Duplicative data cost in US healthcare	\$78 billion per year	[2]
Hospitals reporting EHR interoperability issues	47%	[10]
Labs with missing patient demographics information	40%	[11]
Improved data reliability due to MDM	50%	[6]
Providers offering genomic testing	90%	[12]

Based on all the literature review, research, and analysis, this paper aims to establish MDM's strategic role in modern digital-first healthcare, with a particular emphasis on precision medicine and population health.

## FINDINGS

### MDM in Healthcare: Creating Unified Data

MDM provides a centralized framework for managing core healthcare entities—patients, providers, payers, locations—ensuring consistent representation across all systems. By acting as a single source of truth, MDM enhances data integrity and reduces duplicate records, which could save \$78 billion per year [2]. A unified patient identity is essential for delivering personalized, digital-first healthcare experiences. MDM platforms use deterministic, probabilistic, and referential matching techniques to construct Enterprise Master Patient Indexes (EMPIs) that resolve duplicates and overlays.

Verato and 4medica report that identity errors are a top cause of denied claims and diagnostic delays [7, 8]. By ensuring accurate patient identification, MDM underpins effective engagement across portals, apps, telehealth, and messaging systems. It also enables dynamic consent tracking and privacy preference updates across platforms. Illustrating MDM's unifying role is the concept of a “360-degree view” of the patient. Life sciences and healthcare organizations strive to combine first-party clinical data with second- and third-party data (e.g., pharmacy fills, socio-economic indicators) to achieve a full picture of an individual. Figure 1 shows a schematic of Patient 360 integration: data from hospitals, doctor visits, labs, pharmacies, insurance claims, IoT devices, SDoH surveys, and more are all connected to the patient's master profile, enabling both better patient engagement and analytics-driven insights.

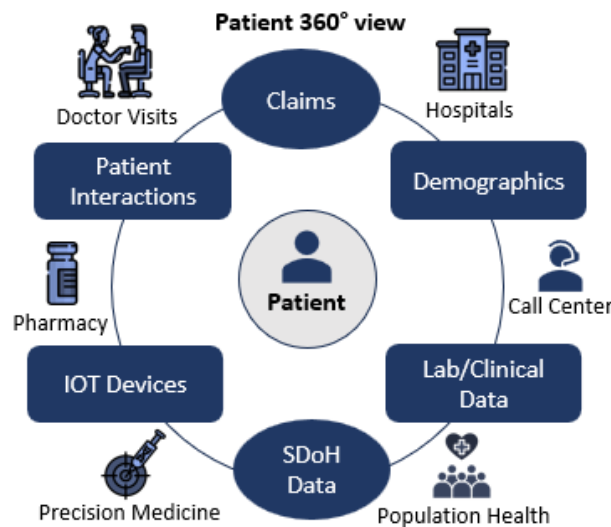


Figure 1: Patient 360-degree view

MDM in healthcare serves as the linchpin that holds together the myriad data threads, ensuring that they weave into a coherent fabric rather than a tangled web.

### MDM-Driven Interoperability and Standardization

Siloed EHRs, disparate lab systems, non-integrated payer platforms, and inconsistent code systems (e.g., local vs. ICD-10 or SNOMED) contribute to a fragmented data ecosystem. Inter-organizational communication is often hindered by lack of patient-matching capabilities. The absence of a national patient identifier in the U.S. complicates identity resolution across systems. Further, regulatory frameworks such as the 21st Century Cures Act and TEFCA demand data exchange and patient-centric access, yet compliance is impossible without reliable, harmonized datasets [10].

MDM supports structural and semantic interoperability. Through entity resolution and terminology standardization (e.g., mapping SNOMED to ICD-10 or LOINC for lab results), MDM enables accurate and meaningful data exchange across systems. HL7 FHIR is gaining traction as a standard for real-time data sharing. However, without MDM to harmonize underlying data, FHIR APIs merely transmit inconsistent information. By aligning terminologies and resolving patient identities, MDM complements and strengthens FHIR-based exchanges [13].

MDM supports structural interoperability by providing a unified schema or data model for certain core entities and their attributes. Modern MDM platforms often use a hub-and-spoke model or a data lake integration, where source data is ingested and then mastered into a common model. This mastered data can then be published or made accessible via standard APIs (Application Programming Interfaces). With healthcare's shift toward open APIs (accelerated by the Cures Act's requirements), many EHRs and data systems now expose FHIR APIs for data access. MDM can work in concert with these by ensuring that when a FHIR API call is made (say, to retrieve a patient's medications list), the data returned is consolidated from all relevant sources and free of duplicates. Moreover, because MDM enforces consistent identifiers (like a global patient ID or provider ID), FHIR resources coming from different systems can be linked together accurately. In essence, MDM can serve as the backend harmonization layer that feeds clean and coherent data to interoperability services.

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Figure 2 shows an example of the structural interoperability enabled by MDM via the hub-and-spoke implementation model.

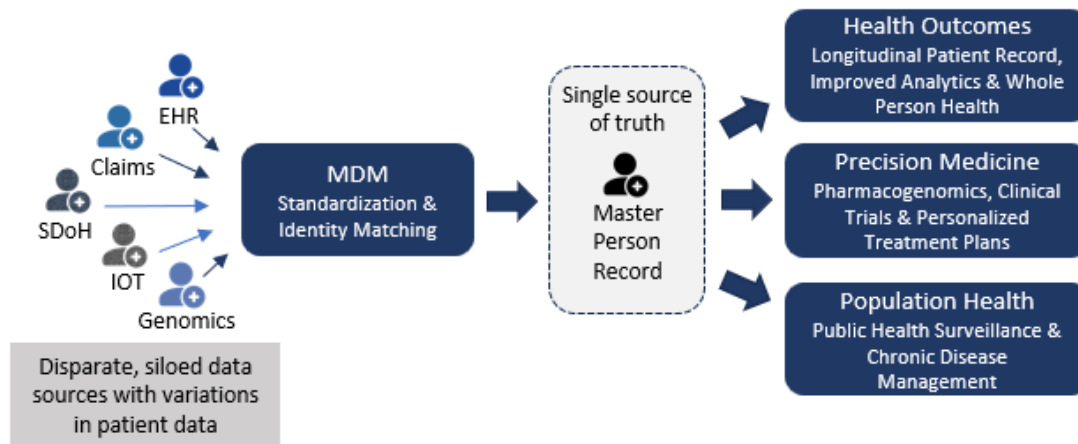


Figure 2: MDM enables interoperability via a unified schema

MDM also plays a key role in cross-organizational interoperability initiatives like Health Information Exchanges (HIEs) or national networks. Master Data, as an asset, can be used to collaborate with local, state, and national Healthcare Information Exchanges, and to meet the CMS interoperability requirements to deliver data via FHIR standards [14, 15]. For example, if two hospitals both participate in an HIE and each has an internal MDM solution, they likely have resolved many internal duplicates and ensured standard coding. When they exchange data, the HIE doesn't have to deal with as many variations or conflicting records, making exchange more plug-and-play. In payer-provider collaboratives, MDM ensures that shared data maintains integrity, enabling value-based care coordination and real-time risk stratification [9].

### MDM - Governance, Compliance, and Ethics

From a policy standpoint, there have been moves to break down silos. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, beyond privacy rules, initially included provisions to encourage data standardization for electronic transactions. More recently, the 21st Century Cures Act and its 2020 Final Rule on interoperability explicitly banned “information blocking” – i.e., practices that impede the exchange of health data – and required that patients be given access to their health information via APIs. It also led to the creation of the Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA), which sets the stage for nationwide health information exchange through designated networks called Qualified Health Information Networks (QHINs) [10].

MDM systems enable the breakdown of data silos and support ethical data use by enforcing access controls, audit trails, and role-based permissions. These features ensure compliance with HIPAA, GDPR, and emerging AI governance mandates. When building AI algorithms for clinical decision support or risk prediction, MDM provides clean, bias-mitigated training data with traceable provenance. As AI models proliferate in healthcare, concerns around fairness, explainability, and consent will grow. MDM platforms provide the foundational controls to address these issues, aligning with principles of ethical AI deployment [5].

### MDM Enabled Data Integration for Precision Medicine

Precision medicine, often used synonymously with personalized medicine, is predicated on the idea of tailoring medical treatment to the individual characteristics of each patient. These



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characteristics include not only clinical factors (like medical history, lab results) but also genetic/genomic information, lifestyle factors, and environment. To realize precision medicine, healthcare providers and researchers must integrate data across time (longitudinal records) and domains (clinical, genomics, etc.) for each patient. Master Data Management is a crucial enabler in this integration process.

Through entity resolution and terminology standardization, MDM platforms reconcile data across EHRs, lab systems, biorepositories, and third-party genomic services. UPMC's MDM-driven approach allowed the system to operationalize precision medicine at scale, shifting from a research-oriented model to routine clinical care. At UPMC's Center for Connected Medicine, MDM has been instrumental in incorporating pharmacogenomic data into clinical workflows. By linking sequencing data to EHRs and clinical decision support systems, the health system enables physicians to tailor treatments to individual genetic profiles [12]. This facilitates targeted oncology treatment, adverse drug event prevention, and increased clinical trial enrolment. The data unification also resulted in robust audit trails and consent tracking mechanisms aligned with HIPAA and IRB requirements.

Precision medicine is not only about genetics – it's also about understanding how a person's condition evolves and responding proactively. A longitudinal record that aggregates data across many encounters and even across modalities (in-person visits, telehealth, continuous glucose monitor readings, etc.) is essentially what MDM provides by consolidating data over time. With such a record, clinicians can identify trends (say, progressive kidney function decline in a diabetic patient) and intervene earlier with personalized strategies. Precision oncology is an area that really illustrates the need for master data integration. A cancer patient's journey can involve genomic tests (like tumor sequencing), imaging data, surgical pathology, outcomes from various treatments, etc., possibly occurring at different centers (maybe surgery at one hospital, chemotherapy at another). For learning which treatments work best for specific genetic tumor profiles, researchers need combined datasets of all these pieces. An MDM approach can unify a patient's data from multiple institutions if they collaborate, for instance, through a regional cancer data trust where patient identities are matched and a master record is formed for each patient across the region's hospitals. MDM also standardizes medical vocabularies (e.g., HGNC, ClinVar, SNOMED) to ensure consistent representation of genetic and phenotypic data across systems. Such harmonization is crucial for matching patients to therapies and interpreting results within decision support tools [5].

### **MDM and Population Health: Enabling Risk Stratification and Chronic Disease Surveillance**

In the realm of population health, MDM provides the backbone for identifying high-risk patient cohorts, managing chronic diseases, and addressing care gaps. By linking fragmented records across clinical and non-clinical systems (e.g., housing, employment, transportation), MDM enables healthcare organizations to stratify patients based on both clinical indicators and social determinants of health (SDoH). Public health agencies can use MDM to create registries for diabetes, hypertension, and asthma that integrate clinical labs, pharmacy data, and socioeconomic metrics. These registries support proactive interventions such as home visits, telehealth follow-ups, and community outreach. MDM's ability to deduplicate and link data also enhances disease surveillance capabilities, allowing for the timely detection of emerging trends and resource allocation. Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS), serving one of the most populous counties in Texas, is responsible for monitoring and responding to over 100 reportable diseases. DCHHS's investment in MDM transformed its population health infrastructure [6]. With high-quality, integrated data at its fingertips, the agency was able to

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better anticipate outbreaks (like COVID-19), deliver targeted interventions, and allocate resources more effectively. The case also set a precedent for how local health departments can use enterprise-level data management strategies to meet real-world public health needs.

The CDC has emphasized the importance of integrating SDoH data into care delivery for effective population health strategies [16]. MDM systems that connect social and clinical datasets are essential for achieving this goal, enabling granular insights at the community level. MDM also helps with care coordination in population health. High-risk patients often see multiple providers (primary care, specialists, possibly different hospitals). Without a unified record, each provider might only know their piece, and coordination suffers. But if a health information exchange or integrated delivery network uses MDM to unify patient data, care coordinators (nurses or case managers who manage population health programs) can see all interactions a patient has had. They might notice, for instance, that a patient with heart failure was in the ER twice in the last month at two different hospitals – a sign of escalating issues – and then intervene by arranging a home health visit or specialist appointment. If the data weren't unified, those two visits might not be connected, and the opportunity for timely intervention would be lost.

MDM's unified data also aids in identifying population segments that might benefit from specific programs. For instance, integrating financial or insurance data (like claims, cost of care) with clinical data can highlight high-cost, high-need patients for care management. The insurer can then proactively engage the member with personalized interventions (like assigning a case manager or enrolling in a diabetes prevention program). Finally, MDM can integrate public health and population health efforts. For instance, linking immunization registry data (public health) with the provider's patient roster (via MDM of patient IDs) can quickly show which patients have missing vaccinations. This became crucial for COVID-19 vaccination drives.

From a global perspective, countries with unified health systems inherently have a form of master data (often a national patient ID and integrated records). They tend to do better in population health metrics because they can more easily implement preventive programs and track outcomes across the entire population. In the U.S., achieving that unity relies on technology like MDM to virtually bring together data in the absence of a single system.

## DISCUSSION

Master Data Management (MDM) has evolved into a cornerstone of healthcare modernization, moving well beyond its early role as a tool for cleaning and consolidating records. Today, it plays a pivotal role in enabling complex, data-driven initiatives like precision medicine and population health. What's clear from the research is this: both fields depend on the ability to access and trust integrated data from across the healthcare spectrum—whether it's clinical histories, genetic information, patient behaviour, or social determinants. Without this level of data consistency and connectivity, these advanced approaches simply can't be delivered effectively.

In the realm of precision medicine, MDM provides the necessary infrastructure to ensure that complex data—genetic markers, lab results, environmental exposures—can be accurately tied to individual patients. This linkage is essential for developing targeted therapies, reducing adverse drug reactions, and supporting research in genomics and individualized care. When

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data is clean, connected, and context-aware, clinical teams can make better-informed decisions that reflect the full picture of a patient's health.

One of MDM's most important contributions to population health is its ability to highlight disparities in care. By identifying missing or inconsistent data across demographic lines, MDM supports more equitable outreach and better-informed planning. When coupled with geographic data, it allows health systems to anticipate and address needs in underserved areas—whether that means improving vaccine coverage, monitoring air or water quality, or preparing emergency services. As MDM systems increasingly integrate with artificial intelligence and predictive analytics, their value only grows, enabling health leaders to move from reactive to proactive strategies in both clinical and public health settings.

### **FUTURE OUTLOOK: MDM and the Next Generation of Healthcare Innovation Digital Twins**

The concept of digital twins [17, 18, 19] in healthcare is an exciting frontier that will play a vital role in precision medicine. A digital twin is a virtual replica of a physical entity – in this case, potentially a digital twin of a patient that mirrors their health status in silico. The digital twin can be used to run simulations (e.g., predict how a patient might respond to a certain drug or how a surgery might impact their anatomy). For a digital twin to be realistic and useful, it must be fed with detailed, up-to-date data about the person – their genetics, physiology, lifestyle, current and past medical interventions, etc. This is a staggering amount of data, and it must be integrated from many sources (imaging, labs, wearables, genomic databases, clinical notes). MDM provides the scaffold for collecting and updating this comprehensive profile. Essentially, MDM would act like the conscience of the digital twin, keeping it accurate and in sync with the real world. As digital twin technology advances, especially with the introduction of real-time data integration and analytics, the need for MDM becomes more acute.

### **Learning Health Systems (LHS)**

Learning Health Systems (LHS) are healthcare systems that continuously self-improve by systematically integrating data and evidence into practice. LHS uses routinely collected data to continuously monitor and improve health care outcomes [20]. MDM can be seen as the engine that ensures the “routinely collected data” is accurate, harmonized, and readily accessible for analysis. In a future LHS, every patient encounter contributes to a growing knowledge base. MDM will ensure that data from that encounter (diagnoses, treatments, outcomes) gets correctly linked to similar data from other encounters, making aggregated analysis possible. As LHSs mature, healthcare systems will deploy enterprise MDM not just for operations but also explicitly as part of their research and quality improvement infrastructure.

### **Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM)**

Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) and the broader Internet of Medical Things (IoMT) are already expanding the data available on patients between visits. Wearable ECG patches, smart glucose monitors, connected scales, blood pressure cuffs, even ambient sensors at home (for movement or sleep) – all these generate continuous data. For clinicians to effectively use RPM data, it often needs to be distilled and integrated into the patient's health record. MDM can assist by linking device data to the right patient and summarizing it alongside clinical metrics. For example, an MDM system might intake daily blood pressure readings from a patient's home BP cuff and record a trend or weekly average in the master record. When the patient comes to the clinic, the doctor sees not just the one BP reading in the office, but the trajectory over weeks from home readings, which is much more informative. In the near future, humans will have



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thousands of digital interactions per day, many health-related, via wearables and devices [21].  
Harnessing that torrent in a clinically meaningful way will require master data consolidation.

## CONCLUSION

Master Data Management (MDM) plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of healthcare by bridging the gap between technology and care delivery. Its significance lies in its ability to bring together disparate data sources—ranging from clinical records and genomic profiles to social and behavioural indicators—into a coherent and dependable framework. This unified view of patient data is critical not only for advancing personalized treatment strategies but also for understanding population-wide health dynamics.

Standard MDM implementations have some limitations, like real-time processing of unstructured data and integration with blockchain technology to enable federated data exchanges [22] and cross-organizational networks. Further research into these areas would be beneficial to the field of Healthcare MDM. The trajectory of healthcare is undeniably toward more data-intensive and integrated models of care, from genomic medicine to community health improvement and beyond. As technologies such as AI-driven diagnostics and remote patient monitoring become more widespread, the need for robust, ethical, and scalable data management will only grow.

Healthcare organizations that view MDM as a strategic investment, not just an IT utility, will be better equipped to meet the demands of modern medicine. MDM empowers systems to be more responsive, data-informed, and equitable, ultimately supporting a healthcare model capable of both personalizing care and managing health at the population level.

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