

Ethical AI: More Than Just Responsible or Trustworthy

Timothé Ménard and Katrina A. Bramstedt

Volume 9, Number 2, 2026

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1124223ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1124223ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Programmes de bioéthique, École de santé publique de l'Université de Montréal

ISSN

2561-4665 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

Ménard, T. & Bramstedt, K. A. (2026). Ethical AI: More Than Just Responsible or Trustworthy. *Canadian Journal of Bioethics / Revue canadienne de bioéthique*, 9(2), 198–198. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1124223ar>

© Timothé Ménard and Katrina A. Bramstedt, 2026



This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

LETTRE À L'ÉDITEUR / LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Ethical AI: More Than Just Responsible or Trustworthy

Timothé Ménard^a, Katrina A. Bramstedt^{a,b}

Mots-clés

intelligence artificielle, IA, bioéthique, responsable, fiable

Keywords

artificial intelligence, AI, bioethics, responsible, trustworthy

Affiliations

^a F. Hoffmann-La Roche AG - CH-4070, Basel, Switzerland

^b Queensland University of Technology School of Medicine, Brisbane, Australia

Correspondance / Correspondence: Timothé Ménard, timothe.menard@roche.com

Critical discussions about AI governance are often obscured by the interchangeable use of terms: “ethical AI” (1), “responsible AI” (2), and “trustworthy AI” (3). While related, their distinctions are profound, and we believe the focus must be squarely on ethical AI, as it provides a foundational moral framework that extends beyond the operational scope of “responsible” or “trustworthy” practices. Responsibility and trust are subsets of the overarching ethics. Further, “responsible AI” is too often aligned with legal defensibility, corporate compliance, and accountability (2,3), while “trustworthy AI” — with frameworks like “Z-Inspection” — concentrates on technical reliability and quality control (4). These concepts are necessary but fall short of the bigger picture that is ethical AI. Reducing ethics to a checklist of compliance and functionality sidesteps the deeper and more complex engagement with moral values and societal good.

The importance of this distinction becomes clear in high-stakes fields like pharmaceuticals, device, and diagnostics research and development (1). An AI-assisted system can be fully compliant (“responsible”) and technically flawless (“trustworthy”) yet still lead to profoundly inequitable outcomes. Consider an AI tool for clinical trial recruitment that, in optimizing for data completeness, marginalizes underrepresented populations. This is not a technical glitch; it is an ethical failure that perpetuates health inequities. As another example, an AI-assisted system could be created and deployed as a human bioweapon, challenging the principle of ethical use. This highlights a foundational concept: legality is not a substitute for ethics, as there can be things that are legal (and compliant) but not ethical. Technology invariably outpaces regulation, creating a vast space where specific laws do not yet exist for every ethical dilemma. A framework grounded in moral principles is therefore essential to navigate this territory, moving beyond what is merely legal to what is fundamentally normatively right.

Ensuring that AI practices are sound requires a proactive approach that places ethics at the forefront of innovation. We must move the conversation beyond the comfortable but insufficient language of responsibility and trustworthiness. Prioritizing ethical AI is a commitment to rigorous moral scrutiny, especially in critical fields like drug development, where the ultimate measure of success is the advancement of human health and equity.

Reçu/Received: 16/07/2025

Conflits d'intérêts

Au moment où cette lettre a été rédigé, Timothé Ménard et Katrina Bramstedt étaient employés par Roche et détenaient des actions de F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ag.

Publié/Published: 16/03/2026

Conflicts of Interest

At the time this letter was written, Timothé Ménard and Katrina Bramstedt were employed by Roche and owned F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ag stock.

Édition/Editors: Hazar Haidar & Aliya Affdal

Les éditeurs suivent les recommandations et les procédures décrites dans le [Core Practices](#) de COPE. Plus précisément, ils travaillent pour s'assurer des plus hautes normes éthiques de publication, y compris l'identification et la gestion des conflits d'intérêts (pour les éditeurs et pour les auteurs), la juste évaluation de manuscrits et la publication de manuscrits qui répondent aux normes d'excellence de la revue.

The editors follow the recommendations and procedures outlined in the COPE [Core Practices](#). Specifically, the editors will work to ensure the highest ethical standards of publication, including: the identification and management of conflicts of interest (for editors and for authors), the fair evaluation of manuscripts, and the publication of manuscripts that meet the journal's standards of excellence.

REFERENCES

1. Ménard T, Bramstedt KA. [Developing a set of AI ethics principles to shape ethical behavior in drug development](#). *Ther Innov Regul Sci*. 2025;59(3):399-402.
2. Goellner S, Tropmann-Frick M, Brumen B. [Responsible artificial intelligence: a structured literature review](#). 2024;arXiv:2403.06910.
3. Bouhouita-Guermech S, Haidar H. [Scoping review shows the dynamics and complexities inherent to the notion of “responsibility” in artificial intelligence within the healthcare context](#). *Asian Bioeth Rev*. 2024;16(3):315-44.
4. Zicari RV, Amann J, Bruneault F et al. [How to assess trustworthy AI in practice](#). 2022;arXiv:2206.09887v2.