

You can't see the data. But you can see what it does.

Henrik Nakskov — Danish life sciences specialist, CEO of Novyra Life Sciences and Safe Implant Technology — on borrowing wartime supply-chain theory for clinical trials, the audit that found a changed data point with no audit log, and why AI needs a fence, not a leash.

Henrik Nakskov spent a decade in haematology at Novo Nordisk, running data management for trauma and stroke trials where patients, by definition, would not lie still. Out of that chaos came an unusual borrowing: supply chain management theory, developed in the US during the Second World War, applied to the question of when a data point arrives, who owns it, and who needs it next. The result on one study: last-patient-out to database release fell from the industry-normal eight to twelve weeks down to two days.

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You can't see the data, like a proton in CERN. But you can see how it influences the surroundings. That's how you know it's there.

— Henrik Nakskov, on Pharma Prescribed

Minutes matter, and the data shows exactly how much

In stroke trials, Henrik's team mapped the full timeline from the moment of haemorrhage to hospital admission, CT scan, and treatment. Patients medicated within three hours of stroke walked out of hospital; past four hours, the probability of lasting disability rose sharply. The same data-intelligence approach caught something no one had noticed: one hospital's CT scanner was booked through two secretaries, so acute stroke patients weren't fast-tracked to a scan. The hospital's own quality system hadn't flagged it. The data did.

Trust is the product, and it's testable

An audit at one client turned up SDTM data exchanged over a secure FTP site with no audit log and fifteen administrators with access. Henrik had the auditee open the file, change a patient's sex, save it, and reopen it — the change held, with no trace of who made it or when. His pitch to founders now is blunt: control your data well enough to prove it, and you can put a bow tie on it and add a zero to your company's valuation. Investors increasingly do their own due diligence on the data itself, not just the idea behind it.

AI without a fence is a black box

Henrik's rule for using AI in audits and data work: set the framework first, build checkpoints to confirm the model is staying inside it, and increase safety surveillance in direct proportion to how much you've automated. His test for where the line sits is simple — a model can only draw on what it's already been trained on. It cannot ask a genuinely new question of the future. That gap, he argues, is exactly where the human has to stay in the loop.

QUICKFIRE ROUND

Advice to his younger self: Follow your lead, and surround yourself with good people — "if you surround yourself with bad people, you are polluting your soul."

Top qualities for building a team: The right psychological fit for the task, a personality suited to the environment, and a genuine willingness to keep learning.

Favourite thing outside work: Working out every day, cooking, and sailing when he can still justify the cost of it.

Golden rule, in life and business: His children, and now his first grandchild, come first — "nothing sideways."



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Henrik Nakskov is a Danish life sciences specialist with over 20 years in clinical drug development. He is CEO of Novyra Life Sciences and Safe Implant Technology, and founder of CIMS Consult.