

LAUNCH OF RHAPSODY - 5TH SEPTEMBER 2016



An Innovative Medicines Initiative Project for Precision Therapy and Prevention of Diabetes

Frankfurt, Germany / Lausanne, Switzerland / Suresnes, France / Lund, Sweden

RHAPSODY (“Risk Assessment and ProgreSsiOn of DIabetes”), a public private consortium funded by the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) and EFPIA Companies with contributions from academic institutions, has announced the launch of a project focused on assessing the risk of progression of pre-diabetes to overt diabetes and of rapid deterioration of type 2 diabetes (T2D), a pandemic disease, which currently affects 285 million people worldwide. It is anticipated that this number will rise sharply to affect 439 million people worldwide by 2030, in particular spreading to the younger population.

Leading European experts from 20 academic institutions, 4 EFPIA pharmaceutical organizations and 2 biotech companies officially launched the IMI project RHAPSODY. IMI is a unique Public Private Partnership between the pharmaceutical industry (represented by the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations / EFPIA) and the European Union. The EU contributes a total of EUR 2.5 billion over ten years, which is matched by dedicated resources provided by EFPIA member companies.

RHAPSODY is a unique collaboration of leading public and private research groups, which will include over 100 researchers operating in 7 different scientific work packages. RHAPSODY is based on the availability of large population prospective cohorts, with unique collection of genetic, biochemical and clinical data. RHAPSODY will also benefit from extensive and unique resources developed in previous IMI projects. Combining new and existing data with the expertise of its partners, RHAPSODY will develop novel biomarkers to refine diagnosis leading to better patient stratification, promote prevention, and support innovative drug discovery for personalized management of diabetes.

“We are delighted to have formed such a strong consortium to meet these ambitious goals,” A. Ktorza (Project Leader; Servier), B. Thorens (Coordinator, Uni. Lausanne), H. Ruetten (Co-Project Leader; Sanofi) and L. Groop (Co-Coordinator; Uni. Lund) agree. “It is RHAPSODY’s ambition to fully characterize novel biomarkers for assessing the progression of pre-diabetes to diabetes and the rapid progression of overt T2D. Biomarker identification, characterization and development for use in clinical and pharmacological applications will be guided by the requirement for their validation by the European Medical Agency and for coherence with cost-benefits assessment. Therefore, we reach out to representatives of Regulatory Agencies and Patient Associations to participate in this project from its beginning. This will ensure that the discovery process of RHAPSODY will minimize the time between biomarker identification and clinical use and will allow thorough evaluation of the benefit for patients.”

About RHAPSODY

The RHAPSODY team is coordinated by the University of Lausanne, Servier, Lund University and Sanofi and is working on a new definition of the molecular taxonomy of T2D diabetes that will support patient segmentation, inform clinical trial design, and enable the establishment of regulatory paths for the adoption of novel strategies for diabetes prevention and treatment.

To address these goals, RHAPSODY brings together leading European experts, to identify, and characterize causal biomarkers for T2D subtypes and progression. Our plans are built upon: (a) access to large European cohorts with comprehensive genetic analyses and rich longitudinal clinical and biochemical data and samples; (b) detailed multi-omic maps of key T2D-relevant tissues and organs; (c) extensive expertise in the development and use of novel genetic, epigenetic, biochemical and physiological experimental approaches; (d) the ability to combine existing and novel data sets through effective data federation and use of these datasets in systems biology approaches towards precision medicine; and (e) expertise in regulatory approval, health economics and patient engagement. These activities will lead to the discovery of novel biomarkers for improved T2D taxonomy, to support development of pharmaceutical activities, and for use in precision medicine to improve health in Europe and worldwide.

RHAPSODY participants are Université de Lausanne, Lunds Universitet, Technische Universität Dresden, Università di Pisa, Université Paris-Diderot - Paris 7, Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Institut Suisse de Bioinformatique, The Chancellor, Masters and Scholars of the University of Oxford, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Itä-Suomen yliopisto (University of Eastern Finland), University of Dundee, Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Lipotype GmbH, Kobenhavns Universitet, Azienda Ospedaliero-Universitaria Città della Salute e dell Scienza di Torino, Academisch Ziekenhuis Groningen, Centre Hospitalier Regional et Universitaire de Lille, Academisch Ziekenhuis Leiden - Leids Universitair Medisch Centrum, SCIPROM Sàrl, Institut de recherches Servier, Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, Novo Nordisk A/S, Sanofi-Aventis Deutschland GmbH, VU University Medical Center.

The close collaboration of academic teams, pharmaceutical companies and biotechs provides unique levels of expertise and forms a strong basis for reaching the ambitious RHAPSODY project goals.

For further details, please visit: <http://imi-rhapsody.eu>

About IMI

The Innovative Medicines Initiative is a unique Public Private Partnership (PPP) between the pharmaceutical industry represented by the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) and the European Union represented by the European Commission.

IMI's overall goal is to make Europe once again the world leader in pharmaceutical research for the benefit of the economy and society by removing research bottlenecks in the current drug development process.

For further details, please visit: <http://imi.europa.eu>