What makes you pre-diabetic and someone else not? Will your condition progress to overt type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2D) or remain in the pre-diabetic form? How fast will the disease progress? These are some of the questions to be addressed by the new RHAPSODY project (Risk Assessment and Progression of Diabetes). The answers will have a major impact on health – and healthcare budgets – across Europe.

RHAPSODY pools experts from all over Europe and draws on resources developed in previous IMI projects.

“A large network is the only way to gain access to this unique collection of data”

RHAPSODY pools experts from across Europe and sets out to achieve it: over 100 researchers from across Europe, including several leaders of Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) projects, working together on 7 different work packages.

The project’s size and complexity is exactly the reason it will succeed, explains Prof. Bernard Thorens of the University of Lausanne (UNIL), coordinator of the project. “To reach our goal, we need broad expertise in such fields as lipidomics, metabolomics, proteomics, transcriptomics, genetics and epigenetics.

“Unique collection of data”

The consortium combines genetic, biochemical and clinical data from population cohorts gathered all over the continent. “A large network is the only way to gain access to this unique collection of data,” explains Prof. Thorens. Data from the entire continent will be standardised to describe sub-groups of patients who progress at different rates. In this way, RHAPSODY hopes to unlock the secrets of the progression of diabetes.

Unique collection of data

What would a breakthrough look like? Finding biomarkers that identify the different progression rates of diabetes,” says Prof. Thorens. “By working with people whose disease progresses rapidly, we hope to define sub-groups, opening the way towards precision medicine.” Hence RHAPSODY’s importance to future health economics, he says. “Which drugs will be cost efficient? Will they be worthwhile in terms of quality of life? It is important to take a global view.”

Diabetes is the pandemic of our time. Some 285 million people are diabetic and by 2030, it may affect 439 million, hitting children and young adults the hardest. “RHAPSODY” (Risk Assessment and Progression of Diabetes) pools the data and expertise of 20 academic institutions, 4 pharma organisations, 1 biotech company and 1 management SME to discover how diabetes progresses. The goal is to develop precision therapy and prevention to stop the disease.
CONTENT SUMMARY

RHAPSODY (Risk Assessment and Progression of Diabetes) is a consortium funded by the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) and the pharma industry. The project seeks to define the molecular taxonomy of type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2D) so as to assess the risk of progression from pre-diabetes to overt diabetes. The knowledge will lead to better clinical trials and public health programmes for the prevention and treatment of T2D.

FACTS AND FIGURES

**Project Name**
RHAPSODY – Risk Assessment and Progression of Diabetes

**Research Area**
Assessing risk and progression of pre-diabetes and type 2 diabetes to enable disease modification

**Organisations**
University of Lausanne, Switzerland (Coordinator) and 25 partners

**Start Date – End Date**
01.04.2016 – 31.03.2020

**Duration**
4 years (plus another 3 years, depending on progress)

**Project Cost**
€20 million

**Project Funding**
€20 million

**Programme**
Innovative Medicines Initiative 2 Joint Undertaking (Horizon 2020)

**More Information**
www.imi-rhapsody.eu

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"To reach our goal, we need broad expertise"

Prof. Bernard Thorens
Centre for Integrative Genomics
University of Lausanne

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