

Press release EDENT1FI

European Partnership to Combat Type 1 Diabetes Receives €23 Million IHI Funding

Brussels, November 1, 2023 - In a groundbreaking collaborative effort, academic researchers, industry leaders, and charities have joined forces to combat Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) with the support of a €22 million grant from the Innovative Health Initiative (IHI).

EDENT1FI, which stands for "European action for the Diagnosis of Early Non-clinical Type 1 diabetes For disease Interception," is a global consortium comprised of 28 partners spanning 12 countries. These partners have come together with a shared mission: to identify T1D at its pre-clinical stage in children in the general population. The project is funded through the Horizon Europe program and is set to run over five years.

The T1D Challenge

Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) is a growing concern, particularly among children and young people, leading to lifelong implications. Recent years, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, have witnessed an increase in T1D cases. T1D profoundly impacts the quality of life, and individuals developing T1D before age 10 face an average reduction of 14 years in life expectancy. This autoimmune disease results from a complex interplay of genetic and environmental factors that ultimately destroy insulin-producing cells. Approximately 9 million people worldwide are affected, including 300,000 European children, placing a substantial burden on healthcare systems.

A Call for Paradigm Shift

As we commemorate the 100th anniversary of insulin's first clinical use, it is evident that a paradigm shift in T1D management is needed. Early detection and intervention are imperative. While previous screening efforts have predominantly focused on family history, statistics reveal that 90% of new cases arise without familial links. Identifying children within the general population at a preclinical stage is essential. Promising initiatives in Europe are underway, aiming to screen for early T1D indicators. However, a coordinated strategy and comprehensive evaluation are still lacking.

The EDENT1FI Solution

The EDENT1FI project has been designed to address these challenges comprehensively. Its key objectives include:

- Creating a roadmap for general population screening for early-stage T1D in 200,000 children across Europe.
- Assessing the psychosocial, medical, and economic impact of such screening in diverse European health systems and populations, including underserved families.
- Refining the use of T1D biomarkers to improve risk stratification, staging, and personalized monitoring.

- Enabling the development of innovative, adapted therapeutic strategies to effectively prevent and manage T1D.
- Informing and educating the public, healthcare professionals, and regulatory authorities about new paradigms in T1D diagnosis and care.

A Vision for the Future

Ultimately, EDENT1FI aspires to position Europe as a leader in preventing this devastating disease in children and adolescents.

Prof. Chantal Mathieu, Coordinator of EDENT1FI, states, "Our collaborative efforts are driven by a shared commitment to making a tangible impact in the lives of those affected by Type 1 Diabetes. Together, we aim to pioneer innovative approaches that will redefine the landscape of T1D diagnosis and care."

Prof. Anette Ziegler, co-leading this project puts it in this way: "Decades of dedicated research, including pioneering studies in Germany, have made screening for early-stage type 1 diabetes possible. Through EDENT1FI, we now have the opportunity to apply our ground-breaking work across Europe so that we can improve early care and change the course of a disease that affects children and adults life-long."

Funding and Patient Involvement

The project operates within the framework of the Innovative Health Initiative – Joint Undertaking (IHI-JU) and boasts a total budget of approximately €23.5 million. The majority (€22 million) originates through funding from the European Commission (Horizon Europe), from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, from the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International (JDRF) and from in-kind contributions (EFPIA, MedTech and JDRF). Additional funding of €1.5 million is provided to associated UK partners through the UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) Guarantee Fund.

EDENT1FI is also guided by patients themselves through the Patient Advisory Committee, comprising people with Type 1 Diabetes or their parents who provide invaluable feedback and help disseminate the goals of EDENT1FI to the public.

Coordination Team

The EDENT1FI consortium has been initiated by

- Prof. Chantal Mathieu, of KU Leuven in Belgium.
- Prof. Mark Peakman, representing Sanofi.
- Prof. Anette Ziegler, Director of the Institute of Diabetes Research at Helmholtz Munich, German Research Center for Environmental Health
- Dr. Jeannette Söderberg, Director European Research for JDRF International

For media inquiries and further information, please contact: info@edent1fi.eu or www.edent1fi.eu

About EDENT1FI

EDENT1FI (European action for the Diagnosis of Early Non-clinical Type 1 diabetes For disease Interception) is a global collaboration among academia, industry, and charities, working to combat Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) at its pre-clinical stage. With funding from the Innovative Health Initiative (IHI), this 5-year Horizon Europe project aims to pioneer innovative approaches to T1D diagnosis and care, with a focus on early detection and prevention.

About the Innovative Health Initiative (IHI)

The Innovative Health Initiative (IHI) is a collaborative research initiative that aims to accelerate the development of innovative health technologies and solutions. By bringing together public and private partners, IHI supports projects that address critical healthcare challenges and improve the well-being of European citizens.