



T1D Exchange*



press release

EU-supported international research project aims to improve obesity treatment and change the narrative around obesity

Novo Nordisk leads the international, public-private research consortium 'SOPHIA' (Stratification of Obese Phenotypes to Optimize Future Obesity Therapy), which was launched today with the aim of improving risk assessment of comorbidities and treatment for people with obesity.

Bagsværd, Denmark, 2 June 2020 – Twenty-nine leading international partners from civil society, academia and industry have joined forces to better understand obesity and optimise future treatment.

Obesity is a global pandemic currently affecting around 150 million people in Europe and 650 million people worldwide. Obesity complications are common, but we cannot yet predict who will develop any of the 200 known complications of obesity. Moreover, there are insufficient predictors for who will respond to obesity treatments. SOPHIA will identify, characterise and stratify clinically meaningful subpopulations of patients living with obesity to match the right treatment for the right person at the right time. SOPHIA will provide evidence-based classification of predictors for obesity complications and response to obesity treatment while also identifying and charting models for sustainably developing treatment pathways that will be valuable for patients, healthcare systems, researchers and clinicians.

“Our mission within SOPHIA is to enable healthcare professionals to reliably predict the complications of obesity and who will respond to treatment,” said Prof Carel le Roux, coordinator of SOPHIA and obesity physician at the Diabetes Complications Research Centre at University College Dublin.

SOPHIA Project Leader Dr Marianne Ølholm Larsen Grønning of Novo Nordisk, says: “Obesity is a complex, chronic disease and there is still a lot we do not know, both about the biology of the disease itself and how treatment can improve the lives of patients with obesity. SOPHIA is an important step towards understanding obesity better. The collaboration between excellent contributors from academia, industry and associations holds a big promise that we can deliver strong and unique results.”

The voices of people living with obesity will be at the heart of SOPHIA through the establishment of a Patient Advisory Board. It will ensure that patients’ insights, opinions

and wishes are placed at the core of SOPHIA and interwoven into the multiple layers of the study. The research group will use its findings to contribute to a more patient-centric and equitable narrative around obesity and its multiple impacts on individuals from both a social and medical perspective. It all starts with obesity being a chronic disease, not something people choose to live with. SOPHIA has been granted €16 million in funding from the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) - a joint undertaking of the European Commission and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA); JDRF; the Obesity Action Coalition; and T1D Exchange.

Some of the methods used in SOPHIA will be:

- Creating a database
- Conducting analysis
- Conducting in-depth qualitative methods with patients to identify their perceptions and perspectives on obesity diagnosis and treatment
- Finding a shared value with all stakeholders to ensure better treatment of people living with obesity

SOPHIA will also investigate health outcomes in people with obesity who have type 1 diabetes. According to Dr Sanjoy Dutta, JDRF Vice President of Research, "With the statistical power afforded by such a large European collaboration, we will be able to investigate the two-way relationship between obesity and type 1 diabetes and ultimately be able to make valid predictions about health outcomes in this traditionally underappreciated population. Since recent epidemiological data indicate that nearly half of adults with T1D in some European countries have overweight or obesity, it is critical for the T1D community to address this challenge."

The project will officially kick off its activities across Europe on 1 June 2020. It will last until 31 May 2025 and the first milestone is already planned for September 2020.

Project facts

Project acronym:	SOPHIA
Start date:	01 June 2020
Duration:	60 months
Budget:	€ 16 Mio
Coordination:	University College Dublin, Prof Carel le Roux
Project Lead:	Novo Nordisk A/S, Dr Marianne Ølholm Larsen Grønning

SOPHIA partners at a glance

Belgium	Third-I bvba Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Denmark	Novo Nordisk A/S
France	Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Lille
Germany	University of Ulm Lipotype University Hospital Tübingen

	Metabolon Boehringer Ingelheim Pharma GmbH & Co KG
Ireland	University College Dublin University College Cork Atturos The European Association For the Study of Obesity - Ireland Company Limited By Guarantee
Italy	Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Pisa
Netherlands	Erasmus Medisch Centrum Maastricht University
Spain	Girona Biomedical Research Institute
Switzerland	Medtronic International Trading Sarl SIB Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics
Sweden	Lund University University of Gothenburg
United Kingdom	University of Dundee University of Exeter
United States	Eli Lilly and Company George Washington University JDRF International T1D Exchange Obesity Action Coalition

About IMI

The Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) is Europe's largest public-private initiative aiming to improve health by speeding up the development of, and patient access to, innovative medicines, particularly in areas where there is an unmet medical or social need. IMI facilitates collaboration between the key players involved in healthcare research, including universities, the pharmaceutical and other industries, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), patient organisations, and medicines regulators. It is a partnership between the European Union (represented by the European Commission) and the European pharmaceutical industry (represented by EFPIA, the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations). For further information: www.imi.europa.eu

About Novo Nordisk

Novo Nordisk is a leading global healthcare company, founded in 1923 and headquartered in Denmark. Our purpose is to drive change to defeat diabetes and other serious chronic diseases such as obesity and rare blood and endocrine disorders. We do so by pioneering scientific breakthroughs, expanding access to our medicines and working to prevent and ultimately cure disease. Novo Nordisk employs about 43,100 people in 80 countries and markets its products in around 170 countries. For more information, visit novonordisk.com, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube.

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