

BC Platforms
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BC Platforms to provide data management solution for a large European project investigating diabetic complications

18 European universities and research centers have joined efforts to find genetic and other biological causes (biomarkers) behind complications caused by diabetic diseases. The project funding, which totals approximately 40 million dollars, has been made possible by a grant from the European Union and further supplemented by support from five European pharmaceutical companies. BC Platforms, a Finnish SME focusing on data management systems for genetic and clinical research, is to deliver the project database system and provide support of the data management tasks during the five-year project.

The underlying mechanisms of complications arising from diabetes still unknown

There are around 250 million people in the world suffering from diabetes. The number of those afflicted is estimated to increase by 50% by the year 2025. Diabetes cannot be cured, and only type 2 diabetes can be partially prevented. The mechanisms underlying complications stemming from diabetes are still largely unknown.

The majority of diabetes patients develop complications such as atherosclerosis and cardiovascular diseases, nephropathy and retinopathy, which can lead to serious eye and kidney conditions. Ten years after the onset of the disease, 70 percent of patients have some type of eye or kidney complication. It is known that hyperglycemia increases the risk, but it is unknown why 10-15 percent of the patients get complications in spite of having good blood glucose levels, while an equal number of patients with poor levels remain unaffected.

A unified European effort to fight diabetic complications

The concentration of complications in certain families strongly suggests a genetic cause. The survey of genetic and other variants that affect the risk of complications will reveal the basic underlying mechanisms; this is a necessary step toward better understanding the problem and developing new ways to prevent and treat the complications.

SUMMIT (Surrogate markers for vascular Micro- and Macrovascular hard endpoints for Innovative diabetes Tools) is part of the joint undertaking by the EU and the pharmaceutical industry under the name IMI (Innovative Medicines Initiative). The 40 million dollar collaboration of 18 research groups is coordinated by the Diabetes Center at Lund University (LUDC).

The data management system from BC Platforms

BC Platforms is delivering the project database system and will help the group meet their data management challenges throughout the duration of the five-year project. BC Platforms has years of experience collaborating with research groups, supporting data management needs of several research teams. "The database system is ready to be used from day one so that project resources can be fully focused on science", says Timo Kanninen, managing director of BC Platforms.

Another aspect of BC Platforms' role in the project is to collaborate with the researchers, bioinformaticians and programmers in order to connect new scientific tools with the database system. "We'll do our best to support them so that their focus can stay on the development of scientific tools and mathematic models instead of taking care of the routine tasks of data management", Mr. Kanninen continues.

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