

Karin Conde-Knape about NLSDays' super session : 'From Population to Precision'



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For almost 100 years, Novo Nordisk has been translating the unmet medical needs of people living with a serious chronic disease into innovative medicines and delivery systems, like the insulin pens. Tell us what's going on in regard to the precision-approach?

– Within the last 3-4 years, there has been an increasing interest in Novo Nordisk in bringing newtypes of treatments for serious chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease. There are many standard treatments available and therefore there is need to develop next generation of treatments for the right patient. Finding individuals with high residual risk of disease is necessary and we do so by selecting biomarkers based with big data analysis.

What is the major challenge that you are facing?

– In chronic diseases like diabetes or cardiovascular disease where multiple options for treatment exist, the challenge is to bring innovative treatments that will make a difference to the patient. We can no longer look at all patients the same way. We need to understand better specific subpopulations that could benefit more from specific new treatments. We need to leverage human datasets with genetics, omics, etc. in an integrative way to help us identify the right treatment for the right patient. Precision medicine, like in the oncology field, translated into other serious chronic diseases.

How are you tackling these challenges?

– By having collaborations across the world, bilateral and in consortia. The questions being addressed are too big for a single company to tackle them alone; each and every one is contributing to their part of the puzzle. Human data is, of course, becoming a fundamental piece. We need to have the right skills so that data scientists and biologists work together to utilize the wealth of data available to help us understand drivers of disease and the patient of

2030. In order to tackle this challenge, it's crucial to be working together – both in academia, pharma and the biotech industry.

What are you looking for then, when you're partnering with small companies?

– The mindset, the agility - being able to put together collaborations to different academic groups. We are all trying to tackle the same questions, so there is no need to reinvent the tools; it's about putting together the data sets. This would benefit the whole system and it's what the private-public consortia are trying to do.

In the US, there are VCs putting money along these topics, and I hope to see even more to support this efforts. There are also some ongoing big sequencing efforts in diseases where there is a significant gap, like NASH.

When disusing collaborations with the biotech's – those that have the capabilities for data analysis and the right data sets will be the ones to provide the best value. VCs can facilitate this efforts, by putting together a structure so that Company A can work with Company B and Academic Group C.

What is your call-to-action for Nordic companies?

– Have the discussion with pharma! Have the dialogue: "where can pharma help you drive the efforts?" We have samples that could be utilized by diagnostic companies, or data sets that could be leveraged further!

In the area of diabetes, Novo Nordisk is well-known, but people are also getting more aware that we are engaging in areas, such as cardiovascular diseases, NASH, and stem cell research.

We are really looking forward to participating in NLSDays and to getting in touch with new, potential collaborators!

