

Medical Research Agency

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PLN 100 million for civilization diseases - III edition of the competition for non-commercial clinical research

Civilization diseases are responsible for more than 80 percent of the world's population. premature deaths, with cardiovascular and oncological diseases taking the heaviest toll. Innovative therapies and prevention programs can provide improvement in this area. The work of specialists in this field is supported by the Medical Research Agency which offers co-financing for the most promising projects selected in its competitions.

The problem of diseases related to the development of civilization, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer or diabetes was the subject of debate during the conference "Health priorities of Poles in 2021" organized by MRA.

"Despite the pandemic, we must not forget about other diseases, if only because coronavirus most attacks people burdened with civilization diseases. And these people are most at risk for the negative effects of coronavirus infection," said Deputy Health Minister Anna Golawska, who participated in the panel.

"Diseases of civilization, also known as the epidemics of the 21st century, are globally spread, non-communicable diseases that lead to disability and are responsible for more than 80 percent of the world's health. premature deaths" - said prof. Tomasz Hryniewiecki, director of the National Institute of Cardiology. "Cardiovascular disease (vascular, ischemic, stroke) and cancer are at the top of this list. This is followed by the so called "new". degenerative diseases, including Alzheimer's disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes," he explained.

According to the studies he cites, the incidence and mortality of these conditions have changed only slightly in recent years, and in the top 10 diseases of civilization, the situation is still the same, with no apparent improvement. As prof. Hryniewiecki also in Poland still most people die from cardiovascular and oncological diseases. In his opinion, there is still much to be done in this area in our country.

"Public health measures, this is something we are still lacking - especially in those diseases most relevant to Polish society," said the director of the National Institute of Cardiology. "These activities must be planned by the institutes, but it is very good that Medical Research Agency pays attention to this problem and plans special grant projects to support activities in this area," he noted. He added that the medical community is also counting on the effects of such programs as the National Oncology Strategy being prepared or the National Program for Prevention and Treatment of Cardiovascular Diseases. "I hope that the planned grants, that the planned competitions of the Medical Research Agency will help in this" - said prof. Hryniewiecki.

"Of all the projects that are submitted to us, those concerning civilization diseases play a key role," stressed Krzysztof Górski, director of MRA Project Financing Division. "We have the largest number of

submitted projects in the area of cardiology - so far 17 for nearly 300 million PLN and 15 oncology projects recommended for funding - this is nearly 400 million PLN. This includes one large project related to innovative CAR-T therapy used in haematooncology - for 100 million PLN," he added.

"Since the inception of Medical Research Agency and the initiation of the competitions announced by the agency, we, as the hematology community, have seen tremendous progress in the field of non-commercial clinical trials. This is a great opportunity for our patients and for the scientific development of our centres" - said prof. Ewa Lech-Marańda, national consultant in hematology, director of the Institute of Hematology and Transfusiology. " Since the first competition, hematology centers that care for adult patients have been successful in seven competitions, including two for CAR-T therapy," she added.

Director Górski announced that the third edition of the competition on civilization diseases will be announced in the third quarter of next year, with a budget for another 100 million PLN. " The short-term goal of the competition is to increase access for patients or people at risk of civilization diseases to innovative diagnostic and therapeutic solutions in this area," said Krzysztof Górski. " We also want to increase the resources of medical databases (descriptive, imaging, numerical) in this area," he added.

In the long-term perspective (6 years from the end of the project), the results of the works selected in the competition will also include Improved care for patients with civilization diseases resulting from increased competence of the medical community and expanded knowledge in this area. " We also want the consortia that will be established after the end of the project to undertake further cooperation" - said Górski. As he informed, the competition will reward projects from medical specialties that have not participated in it so far, e. g. diabetology.

"Indeed, as an environment, we are not a leader in submissions to MRA" admitted Prof. Leszek Czapryniak, head of the Department of Internal Medicine and Diabetology at the Medical University of Warsaw. According to him, this is due to, among other things. a small number of diabetes centres with high scientific activity and an overwhelming amount of clinical work associated with a large number of patients (2. 5 million people are treated for diabetes in Poland for 1100 diabetologists). Prof. Czapryniak said that it would be worthwhile for diabetes projects to be included in the competition next year, as many studies are missing, e. g. concerning chronic complications of diabetes: vascular-ophthalmic, neurological and cardiological. "These are projects that should be prioritized for funding by MRA," the expert said.

"The fact that this is already the third edition of the competition shows that there is a demand for this type of initiative. In the competition, we should especially ensure that the results of the projects have an impact on the real fight against and prevention of civilization diseases," said Deputy Health Minister Anna Goławska. " It is worth encouraging the submission of projects in areas that are a little less popular - like the diabetology mentioned above. It is also worth noting how these projects will inform the development of further initiatives and translate into further research and impact," she noted.

