

Medical Research Agency

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Medical Research Agency creates Polish Clinical Research Network

The Medical Research Agency is creating a new quality in clinical trials. After the first competition for funding of Clinical Research Support Centres has been decided, the Agency's activities are accelerating towards the further development of the Network of Polish Centres. Already at the beginning of 2021, a second competition was launched to support the next Centres. At the same time, the President of the Agency for Medical Research Dr. Radosław Sierpiński signed an agreement on the creation of the first Polish Clinical Research Network.

The aim of the Polish Clinical Research Network is to implement uniform systemic quality and process solutions in entities implementing clinical trials in Poland. The implementation of the new solutions will directly strengthen Polish's position in the conduct of clinical trials and will contribute to increasing the attractiveness and competitiveness of national infrastructures and their capacity to support high-quality research. The consequence of these changes will be a more effective development of cooperation at international level.

The Polish Clinical Research Network will first join the 10th Beneficiaries of the competition for the establishment of Clinical Research Support Centres. Among them are: Medical University in Łódź, Medical University of Białystok, Karol Marcinkowski Medical University in Poznań, Military Medical Institute, National Institute of Oncology im. Maria Skłodowska-Curie State Research Institute in Gliwice, Medical University of Gdańsk, National Institute of Cardiology of Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński, Institute "Monument - Child Health Center", Wrocław Medical University, National Institute of Geriatrics, Rheumatology and Rehabilitation. In the second stage, the beneficiaries of the second ABM/2021/4 competition will become members of the Network.

The establishment of a national network of clinical trial centres is an initiative modelled on Western European models. Networking of centres is intended to bring tangible benefits to all participants in the process, namely hospitals, researchers and, above all, patients. The main objective of networking centres is to implement a common quality standard and harmonise operational processes related to commercial and non-commercial research. Academic centres are also to benefit by gaining access to the know-how and experience of other centres, to jointly address problems and to improve national cooperation between networked centres. The network aims to ensure an effective recruitment process at national level and improve the feasibility phase of clinical trials. The network is also intended to support the training of staff dedicated to clinical trials.

Harmonising the rules for the implementation of research, reducing contracting time, harmonising valuation or settlement, in the long term will contribute to the optimization of reimbursement costs and drug policy in the health system. The Network will aim to standardise quality in clinical trials, develop common processes and increase the availability of innovative therapies for patients. The Medical Research Agency will serve as a mentor in the creation of the Polish Clinical Research Network.

It will develop and make available an IT platform, which will be the main communication and information tool of the network. In addition, the Agency will initiate and carry out educational activities, prepare uniform models of documents and support the promotion of centres. In the long term, the Agency plans to establish an annual adaptation programme that will allow for the certification of centres.

President Radosław Sierpiński, inaugurating the signing of the agreement on the creation of the network announces: One of the goals of the creation of the Polish Clinical Research Network is to build a relationship between the centers, which will allow the exchange of experience and knowledge, the effective conduct of multicentre clinical trials and the increase in their number in individual centers. We want PSBK to become an internationally recognised brand associated with excellence in clinical trials. The network will help us improve the availability of treatment of patients with the most innovative drugs in the world, but will also significantly affect the development of Polish biotechnology.

A similar opinion is taken by Prof. Piotr Ponikowski, Rector of the Medical University of Wrocław, who stresses that the Nationwide network of clinical trials is not only a step in the right direction, it is a necessary step for the further development of Polish science. We are ready to conduct large-scale clinical trials in Wrocław – the possibility of cooperation with many, which are crucial standardized centers across the country significantly increases our capabilities.

For me, as director of the National Institute of Geriatrics, Rheumatology and Rehabilitation, but above all as a doctor with clinical experience, it is a great distinction to receive invitations to the network, where I see the great potential of joint clinical trials, the implementation of uniform systemic quality and process solutions in entities implementing clinical trials in Poland. The intensification and expansion of research within the network and the exchange of experience between centres will allow patients to be treated quickly and effectively, implementing new therapies, especially in chronic patients, for whom we are currently looking for new treatments – emphasized Dr. Marek Tombarkiewicz, Dr. Marek Tombarkiewicz, during the signing ceremony of the agreement.

The establishment of the Polish Clinical Research Network also has a significant impact on the national economy, through the outflows of clinical trials to the state budget, alternative savings to the health care system, an additional source of remuneration for researchers, doctors and research centers, and an increase in employment and demand for services in other sectors.

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