Summary of the conference "Medical Research Agency - an impulse for the development of science, health and innovation"

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Heated discussions, declarations and set directions for change - this is how the conference entitled "Medical Research Agency - an impulse for the development of science, health and innovation", which ended on Thursday, November 17, can be summarized in a nutshell.

The event was inaugurated by Minister of Health Adam Niedzielski, who in his speech declared that the long-awaited by everyone draft law on clinical trials of medicinal products for human use will be submitted for discussion at the next meeting of the Standing Committee of the Council of Ministers, and will then be forwarded to Parliament for work. The new regulation will bring Polish law in line with EU regulations, but most importantly, it will organize the clinical trials market in our country, making it attractive to non-commercial and commercial entities, while making it safer and more accessible to patients.

Minister Niedzielski, also referred to the challenges facing the health sector related to the aging population, as well as the development of the multi-disease phenomenon in our country. As he stressed, the answer to this condition is investment in new technologies and related impulses - such as the translation of innovations into the system, where he attributed a special role in this regard to the Medical Research Agency.

Referring to the Health Minister's statement, Medical Research Agency President Radoslaw Sierpinski, MD, PhD, noted that the Medical Research Agency strives to set trends in science, and the funding it offers to beneficiaries is an extremely important part of the creation of science in Poland. The Agency influences what will happen in medical science, using national potential. - he concluded.

The conference also featured the first gala presentation of the Medical Research Agency President's Awards "Medicine of Tomorrow" in three categories. The winners were, in the category - Principal Investigator - Professor Anna Raciborska, Institution - Medical University of Gdansk, Non-Governmental Organization - Association of the Polish Group for Treatment of Leukemia in Adults. As it was emphasized, the handing over of symbolic statuettes is an expression of recognition of hard, long-term work for the improvement of the Polish health care system and activities for the benefit of patients.

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The conference also saw the official joining of Poland as a member of the European Clinical Trials Infrastructure Network. ECRIN Director General Jacques Demotes, who was present at the event, stressed that this is another step for further intensive development of international cooperation. The change in status as a member of the ECRIN network will have a positive impact on increasing the availability of research for Polish patients and resources in the form of expertise. Thanks to our country's accession to the network, Polish patients will be able to become participants in large international clinical trials, and thus benefit from the latest therapies, without having to leave the country.

As part of the first panel, "Strategic directions for the development of the health care system and clinical trials," experts emphasized the need to invest in new technologies, however, taking into account not only innovation in the context of new drugs and devices, but also the market for generics. Krzysztof Kopeć - President of the Polish Association of Pharmaceutical Industry Employers - also referred to this issue - Innovation is not only what is over the horizon, i.e. these brand new drugs, but also what is in front of the horizon, i.e. drugs treating millions of Poles - generics and biosimilars. If we don't have them, we probably won't be able to reach beyond the horizon," he pointed out.

The issue of perceived innovation was also raised among experts during the second panel "Perspective on the development of personalized therapies, medical devices and digitalization in Polish health care. As the Director of the Department of Science and Project Financing at ABM - Krzysztof Górski - pointed out, "On the one hand, the Agency wants to develop innovative therapies, on the other hand, to support the Polish generics market. Maintaining a balance in this ecosystem with benefits for the patient is the key objective of our competitions," he stressed.

In addition, experts agreed that although we have great specialists in Poland, human resources are still the bottleneck of the system. As the President of the Medical Research Agency emphasized, one of the key ABM tasks planned under the Clinical Trials Act that has been taken into account is the funding of education and training in this area of clinical research.

The Medical Research Agency also revealed its competition plans for the coming year. Among the areas that will find special attention are the use of artificial intelligence, antibiotic resistance, or the creation of Digital Medicine Centers at existing Clinical Research Support Centers, established with funding from the Medical Research Agency.

The announcement of the competition for the Centers for Digital Medicine is another step in the development of the Polish Clinical Research Network and its affiliated units. We want institutions that conduct academic research to be able to benefit from digital resources as well. Within the framework of the Centers for Digital Medicine, we plan to create a structure for collecting data at the regional and central levels, with all the rigors associated with their preservation. We want these resources to be used for better design of clinical trials," stressed ABM Clinical Research Development Center Director Agnieszka Ryniec.

The conference concluded with an international panel with the participation of foreign experts on oncological diseases, with a special focus on the Tri-Cities. On the topic of mortality from oncological diseases in the region, prevention and international cooperation to support treatment and faster detection of cancer, among others, the panelists discussed: Waldemar Priebe, MD Anderson Cancer Center, George Wilding, Professor Emeritus University of Wisconsin Carbone Cancer Center, Prof. Jeffrey E. Gershenwald, MD Anderson, and prominent Polish oncology specialists.

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