HORIZON-HLTH-2027-02-DISEASE-14-two-stage: Clinical trials for advancing innovative interventions for neurodegenerative diseases

Deadline 1st stage: **13 April 2027**
Deadline 2nd stage: **22 September 2027**
Total budget : 39.3 M€
Budget/project : **~ 10 M€**
Type of action : **RIA**

OBJECTIVES: To advance innovative therapeutic interventions for non-rare neurodegenerative diseases through rigorous early-stage multinational clinical trials, combining active substances with multidisciplinary approaches, in order to improve treatment effectiveness, patient quality of life and reduce societal burden.

Expected Outcomes (ALL):

- Scientific and clinical communities effectively use state-of-the-art knowledge, data, technologies, tools, methods, best practices and training to support the development of innovative interventions for neurodegenerative diseases.
- Strengthened exchange of data, knowledge and best practices across the EU, Associated Countries and beyond.
- Wide use of relevant databases and/or integration with existing infrastructures for storage and sharing of collected data.

Scope (MOST):

- Neurodegenerative diseases pose a major burden on patients, caregivers, healthcare systems and society. Current treatments are limited, mainly symptomatic and may have significant side effects. There is a need for safer, more effective and innovative therapeutic solutions.
- Interventions should combine an active substance with complementary multidisciplinary approaches (e.g. lifestyle, cognitive or rehabilitation components).
- Proposals must conduct rigorous early-stage clinical trials to assess safety and efficacy.
- Trials should include adequately powered and representative patient cohorts (age, sex, ethnicity).
- Projects should also generate insights into mechanisms of action (e.g. imaging, molecular or omics analyses).

The Role of SHS in this call

Which aspects of this topic are related to Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)?

- Inclusion of patient, caregivers and other stakeholders in the design and conduct solutions and clinical trials.
- Access, acceptance, adherence and behavioural dimensions linked to multidisciplinary interventions (e.g. lifestyle change, cognitive training, rehabilitation therapies).
- Trust in innovative therapeutic approaches
- Ethical, legal and societal aspects of testing and implementing innovative interventions (non-autonomy, vulnerability, impossibility to consent, health inequalities, access to trials etc.)
- Representation of diverse populations (age, sex, ethnicity).
- Quality of life assessment and patient-reported outcomes.
- Data governance, sharing practices and societal attitudes towards data use in clinical research.
- Organisation of care pathways and integration of new interventions into health systems (political commitment)

Why applying an SSH perspective is essential?

- Neurodegenerative diseases affect cognition, autonomy and societal structures, including families. Issues such as consent, caregiver burden, stigma, and loss of identity are central.
- Recruitment and retention in clinical trials depend on trust, cultural perceptions, communication strategies.
- Adherence to multidisciplinary interventions depends on motivation, social support and socio-economic context.
- Representation of diverse populations requires understanding structural inequalities and barriers..
- Without SSH integration, interventions risk being scientifically valid but socially unworkable, inequitable or poorly adopted.

What it aims to achieve in the context of this topic?

- Improve trial design by integrating patient perspectives and social realities.
- Enhance recruitment, retention and adherence through behavioural and communication strategies.
- Ensure ethical robustness (consent, vulnerability, data governance)
- Address health inequalities and promote inclusive participation.
- Support the translation of clinical innovation into routine care through policy, economic and organisational analysis.
- Transforming innovative clinical interventions into interventions that are acceptable, equitable, implementable and impactful in real-world settings.