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SynHealth Project Marks Successful 1-Year Milestone with Productive Consortium Meeting in Zagreb



SynHealth consortium in Zagreb, Croatia, 05.07.2025

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The **SynHealth project**, funded under the **Horizon Europe WIDERA program**, is actively pioneering advancements in preventive healthcare through cutting-edge glycan biomarker research. Last week, the project successfully held its **first in-consortium meeting, presentations, and workshops in Zagreb, Croatia**, celebrating one year of significant progress.

This intensive two-day event brought together the dedicated SynHealth team and invited experts for a comprehensive program focused on advancing preventive medicine through research and robust

collaboration. The meeting provided an invaluable opportunity for the consortium to gain a 360-degree view of achieved milestones and upcoming activities.

Day 1: Deep Dives into Science and Strategy

The first day was packed with insightful sessions designed to equip PhD students, early-career researchers, and seasoned experts alike:

- **"CV and Interview Essentials"**: The meeting kicked off with a practical lecture from **Marianna Bevova (University of Luxembourg)**. She shared valuable advice on maximizing opportunities for PhD students and early-career researchers in life sciences, covering common pitfalls, CV enhancement, and navigating the academic ecosystem. Approximately 24 attendees and 15 consortium members participated.
- **Polygenic Risk Scores (PRS)**: **Arina Nostaeva (University of Liège)** led an in-depth analysis of polygenic traits, delving into polygenic risk scores, GWAS (Genome-Wide Association Studies), and using genotype data for individual profiling. This session, aimed at advanced students and early-career researchers, illustrated the application of genetic research in assessing risk trajectories for diseases like cancer.
- **Glycan Biomarkers in Personalized Medicine**: Coordinator **Gordan Lauc (Genos Ltd)** introduces personalized medicine beyond genetics. He highlighted how genes account for a smaller percentage of longevity and complex diseases, introducing **glycans** as crucial, sometimes overlooked, molecules in cellular communication. Dr. Lauc explained how IgG glycans change with age, making them excellent biomarkers for biological age, and described **GlycanAge**, a functional test based on inflammation-regulating molecules.
- **Autoantibody Profiling in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus**: **Ioannis Parodis (Karolinska Institutet)** addressed the challenges of homogeneous SLE treatment, where a "one size fits all" approach often results in only a 50% response rate. He explored the heterogeneity of systemic autoimmune diseases and the potential for autoantibody clusters (specifically IgG and IgA daAAbs) to predict treatment response.
- **Lifestyle and Biological Age: Monitoring Changes with GlycanAge Index**: **Lucija Gosak (University of Maribor)** presented on monitoring lifestyle and biological age changes. While a strong direct link between lifestyle change and glycan age wasn't observed in their initial six-month study, the limitations were acknowledged for future research.

The first day concluded with a dedicated, **private session for the SynHealth consortium**, allowing partners to present their **Work Packages (WPs)** in depth. These 7 presentations unveiled initial outcomes, discussed challenges, potential pivots, and outlined upcoming tasks, providing a comprehensive overview of SynHealth's progress.

Day 2: Navigating Intellectual Property

The second day was fully dedicated to the critical aspects of **Intellectual Property (IP) and Knowledge Transfer**.

- **Workshop on IP & Knowledge Transfer**: **Sigmar Lampe (University of Luxembourg)** led a four-hour interactive workshop covering various types of IP, from collected data to trademarks. The session tackled four main angles:
 - Foundations of Intellectual Property & its Relevance to SynHealth
 - IP Management within the SynHealth Consortium
 - Valorisation and Exploitation Strategies for SynHealth's Impact

- Building a SynHealth Valorisation Action Plan

The SynHealth consortium meeting in Zagreb marked a successful milestone. The consortium left invigorated by the collaborations fostered, and with a clear path forward for advancing personalized preventive healthcare.

About SynHealth:

The SynHealth project, funded by the Horizon Europe WIDERA program, is a pioneering initiative dedicated to advancing personalized preventive healthcare through innovative glycan biomarker research. It brings together a diverse consortium across Europe to translate cutting-edge science into real-world applications.

Contacts:

Tiphaine Vigniel / Communication manager - F6S - tiphaine@f6s.com

Filipa Sousa / Project manager - F6S - afilipa@f6s.com

<https://SynHealth-project.eu/>
