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Research to tackle mobility loss in lung disease sufferers

Northumbria University is part of a £43m pioneering project to develop at-home digital solutions to tackle mobility loss in people affected by chronic diseases.

The project, which has received funding from the European Innovative Medicines Initiative (www.imi.europa.eu), aims to develop a system using small sensors worn on the body so that how well you walk, a vital sign of health and wellbeing, can be monitored and assessed as you go about your daily routine.

How well someone walks is considered the 'sixth vital sign' of health. This is because poor gait, especially walking slowly, is associated with earlier death, greater risk of disease, cognitive decline, dementia and an increased risk of falls.

Comprising 34 research partners based at leading international universities, as well as some of the world's largest pharmaceutical and technical companies, Professor Ioannis Vogiatzis from Northumbria University's Department of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation is a member of the consortium assigned with the study of mobility outcomes in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

He said: "Ageing people with COPD experience profound mobility limitations consequently to pulmonary and locomotor muscle function impairments, thereby increasing the risk for hospitalisation.

"By tackling digital mobility assessment, we will target the increasing prevalence of mobility loss in this population - addressing both a major public health problem and a bottleneck for clinical trial development."

The joint project, called MOBILISE-D, receives support from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA).

Clinicians and scientists from universities across Europe will collaborate with companies from EFPIA - the goal is to develop, validate, and ensure regulation of better mobility outcomes in several diseases, including COPD.

The results of the project will directly lead to drug development and establish a roadmap for clinical implementation of new, complementary tools which will identify, categorize and monitor disability in patients. This will enable widespread, cost-effective access to managing conditions clinically through personalised healthcare.

For more information about the project and its partners, go to www.mobilise-d.eu

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