

## **ParkinsonNet Luxembourg celebrates 5 years**

ParkinsonNet Luxembourg was established only 5 years ago and began full operations in 2018 with the first multidisciplinary professional training. Modelled after the highly effective Dutch programme founded by Prof. Dr. Bas Bloem from Radboud University Nijmegen, the concept focuses on building an integrated care network for people with Parkinson's disease (PD) at all stages. Thanks to its close link to international research, it allows its members to benefit, during their continuous training, of the latest findings and use state of the art treatments. The quality of life of people with PD is at the centre of all activities and it continually improves the exchange between the different healthcare professionals.

This anniversary was celebrated on the 19<sup>th</sup> of November at the Residence of H.E. Mr. Cees Bansema, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Researchers, health professionals and representatives of the Ministry of Health, Caisse Nationale de la Santé (CNS), Luxembourg National Research Fund (FNR), and research institutions from Luxembourg, as well as people diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, attended the event. Achievements were shared, status and future developments of ParkinsonNet Luxembourg were discussed, and the fruitful collaboration between Luxembourg and the Netherlands in the field of Parkinson's disease was celebrated. Mr. Bansema praised the successful partnership, noting that through the network, the strong bonds between the Netherlands and Luxembourg continue to be reinforced.

ParkinsonNet Luxembourg promotes patient-centred care by training healthcare providers to identify and address the specific Parkinson's related needs of each patient and by facilitating communication between the different healthcare disciplines around a patient's individualised treatment.

Research has proven the benefits of ParkinsonNet approach such as the significant lowering of disease-related complications and even the reduction of costs in the Netherlands healthcare system. As the current network perfectly matches with the national effort in establishing 'réseaux de compétences' there is a high interest for funding these effective treatments on a national level. Dr. Jean-Claude Schmit, Director of Health Luxembourg, congratulates ParkinsonNet for piloting in the field in Luxembourg and for establishing a mature network. "It is fulfilling the requirements of the 'réseau de compétences'. Therefore, the Ministry of Health is ready to support and fund this initiative." Christian Oberlé, president of CNS, who initiated the digitalisation of the health sector is convinced: "The existing network is a perfect test bed for implementing innovations for digital health." He sees the CNS as the right partner to support ParkinsonNet in reaching its goals by integrating digital health applications in Luxembourg.

Today, ParkinsonNet Luxembourg continually strives to improve the quality of life for people with Parkinson's. The members are fully committed to continuing medical education as an essential component to best practice for patient support, and crucial to the programme's success. "It sets a new standard in integrated care for complex chronic diseases and benefits from the expertise of a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals that provides instrumental information for people in the field beyond PD." explains Prof. Dr. Rejko Krüger, initiator of ParkinsonNet Luxembourg.

Mr. Kloos who was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2021 shared his experiences: "ParkinsonNet helped me a lot. After the diagnosis, I got excellent support by the ParkinsonNet healthcare professionals. Thanks to them, I have a much better understanding of the disease and know how to live with Parkinson's." Mariella Graziano, physiotherapist trainer for ParkinsonNet Luxembourg, emphasised the importance of training the team of healthcare providers to be well-equipped with skills to help the people

with Parkinson's. "On top of the excellent scientific training, one of the most important lessons that we learned from our Dutch colleagues is that the patient is the expert of having the disease, and as such, he is a member of his therapeutic team and not a mere receiver of care." adds Sylvia Herbrink, speech and language therapist trainer for ParkinsonNet Luxembourg.

The lessons learned during ParkinsonNet Luxembourg's implementation, will be extrapolated for planning additional integrated care networks for other chronic diseases, such as stroke, multiple sclerosis or and inflammatory bowel disease. "When we supported the National Centre for Excellence in Research on Parkinson's Disease (NCER-PD) project eight years ago, we didn't dream of the rapid impact it would have on the patients and on the society overall." comments Dr. Marc Schiltz, Secretary General of the FNR. "NCER-PD was the successful pilot for a new series of NCER programmes that FNR will start in the future". The positive attitude was also shared by Prof. Dr. Bas Bloem, the initiator of ParkinsonNet. Prof. Dr. Bloem concludes "I am very proud of ParkinsonNet Luxembourg, and I am happy to support the network further." As a next step, he recommends a scale-up including other neurological diseases. The event participants unanimously agreed that expertise and a passion for patient care are a vital partnership for battling Parkinson's Disease.

For more information about ParkinsonNet Luxembourg, please visit [www.parkinsonnet.lu](http://www.parkinsonnet.lu)

### **About the Luxembourg Institute of Health**

The Luxembourg Institute of Health (LIH) is a public biomedical research organization focused on precision health and invested in becoming a leading reference in Europe for the translation of scientific excellence into meaningful benefits for patients.

LIH places the patient at the heart of all its activities, driven by a collective obligation towards society to use knowledge and technology arising from research on patient derived data to have a direct impact on people's health. Its dedicated teams of multidisciplinary researchers strive for excellence, generating relevant knowledge linked to immune related diseases and cancer.

The institute embraces collaborations, disruptive technology and process innovation as unique opportunities to improve the application of diagnostics and therapeutics with the long-term goal of preventing disease.

### **About the Luxembourg Centre for Systems Biomedicine (LCSB)**

The LCSB is an interdisciplinary research centre at the University of Luxembourg. It is accelerating biomedical research by closing the link between systems biology<sup>SEP</sup> and medical research. Collaboration between biologists, medical and computer scientists, physicists, engineers as well as mathematicians is offering new insights in complex systems like cells, organs and organisms. These findings are essential for understanding principal mechanisms of disease pathogenesis and for developing new tools in diagnostics

and therapy. Neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's Disease and description of diseases as networks are in the focus of LCSB's research. The Centre has established strategic partnerships with leading biomedical laboratories worldwide and with all major biological and medical research units in Luxembourg. The LCSB fosters collaboration with industrial partners and has founded several spin-off companies, thereby accelerating the translation of fundamental research results into clinical applications.

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