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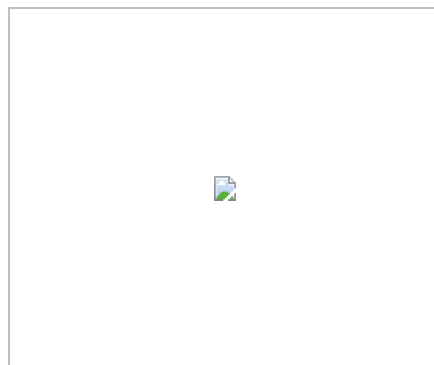
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With Europe's healthcare systems facing the dual pressures of austerity-era cuts and an ageing population, there has never been a more pressing need to establish robust systems for translating rich seams of basic research into the clinic, providing improvements in patient care and generating innovative commercial products.

"As national health budgets shrink, the expectations of patients are not shrinking," said Jerzy Buzek MEP and former president of the European Parliament in his opening address to experts meeting to share best practice, and identify gaps and barriers in translational medicine across Europe, at a workshop held in the European Parliament, 4 June 2013.

No one country or clinical specialism can claim to have a defined and tested

formula for driving this process of translation, with pockets of best practice spread across Europe. However, it is also the case that the newer member states have further to go in building a framework for medical innovation.

In some senses, this presents an opportunity, since it is possible to draw on the wealth of existing best practice and the evidence base of what works – and what does not.

Experience from the front line of translational research

This is the backdrop to the workshop, at which the leaders of 'BASTION – from basic to translational research in oncology', a €5.3 million project to build up the basic research and translational medicine capabilities of the Medical University of Warsaw, outlined the ambitions of the project and progress to date, and some of Europe's leading experts provided insights from their experiences on the front lines of translational research.

Translational medicine does not end with the formation of a spin out or with getting a product into a Phase I clinical trial. It is necessary to keep going until products get to market and patients get access to them. This can be a long, drawn-out and expensive process and technology transfer and commercialisation systems need to provide support across the piece.

Essential ingredients

The experts at the meeting agree a number of essential elements are required to foster the development of the translational medicine ecosystem:

1. The foundation stone is world class research, carried out in world class facilities.
2. It is necessary to focus, and to build critical mass. No one institution, or cluster, or region has all the capabilities and collaboration with academic groups in other countries, with biotech and medtech companies, and with pharma, is essential.
3. It is essential to build human capital – not only in the shape of experts in specific disciplines, but scientists who understand the importance of intellectual property, are schooled in entrepreneurship and who relish working in inter-disciplinary settings. Universities need to explicitly acknowledge their role as generators of industry-ready knowledge and put in place the facilities and resources required to produce it.
4. There must be mentors and role models.
5. The scope of translational medicine should be extended to take in patient access. This means that the requirements of regulators, reimbursement bodies and payers must be taken into



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account at the earliest stages of a research project.

6. The focus must be on patient need. With healthcare systems under severe pressure, innovative and effective drugs and devices that address unmet medical needs, not me-too products are required.
7. The pharmaceutical industry is now looking to the early stages of research for innovation to fuel its denuded pipelines. Translational medicine needs to tap into this demand; universities need to advertise their capabilities and provide channels for pharma to access and work with academics.
8. Encourage dialogue between academics and industry, discuss university research agendas with companies, and build a strong interface populated with technology transfer and commercialisation professionals

A full report of the Workshop can be found here: [BASTION ROUNDTABLE: FROM LAB TO CLINIC](#)

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