Translational science through an open innovation platform, The Innovative Medicines Initiative

Pierre Meulien

Executive Director, Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI), Belgium

The concept of Open Innovation as articulated by its originator, Henry Chesborough, relies on the premise that today (as opposed to a few decades ago) the innovation process relies on knowledge that is created by many disparate groups or individuals who are not located in the same geographical place nor have predetermined disciplinary or sector descriptors. In many modern innovation ecosystems it is now necessary to bring many skill sets together that act at different stages in any particular innovation process in order to accelerate the implementation of innovations in society. This end-to-end integration of ideas, people and processes is nowhere more clearly needed than in the healthcare innovation space.

The Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) was launched in 2008 with the goal of significantly improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the drug development process in Europe, to make drug R&D processes in Europe more innovative and efficient, to enhance Europe's competitiveness and to address key societal challenges of health, demographic change and wellbeing. It represents a true model of open innovation in action. IMI is now in its second phase of development and IMI2 expands the scope of IMI to cover the entire medical research and innovation value chain going from bottlenecks in industry to bottlenecks in industry and society, involving all relevant partners: pharmaceutical; other health-related industries; patients; academia; SMEs; regulators; HTA bodies; in open innovation networks.

IMI projects have developed new taxonomies in diseases such as schizophrenia and respiratory diseases, identified and curated new models in chronic pain and autism, used digital advances to develop relevant databases, and published relevant standards, which are used by industry, and guidelines which impact the regulatory framework. The over 2000 publications resulting from IMI projects have a high citation indices (20% higher than EU average) and therefore demonstrate the excellence of the science we support.