



## Start of new IHI project to advance imaging in arthritis

European research partners, pharmaceutical companies, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and patient organisations have joined forces under the Innovative Health Initiative (IHI) public-private partnership to improve the diagnosis, treatment decisions, and monitoring of major rheumatic diseases. The newly launched IHI AutoPiX project will leverage AI to make clinical imaging more interpretable to scientists, clinicians, and patients.

**Vienna, 9 December 2024 — To enhance imaging biomarkers for patients with rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, and axial spondyloarthritis, the IHI-funded AutoPiX project brings together world-class pharmaceutical and medical technology partners with leading academic institutions.**

These immune-mediated inflammatory diseases affect millions of people across Europe—approximately 4 million for rheumatoid arthritis, 1.3 million for psoriatic arthritis, and 3 to 5 million for axial spondyloarthritis. They share challenges, including the need for timely diagnosis at non-specialist institutions, early and targeted intervention, and effective monitoring.

The AutoPiX consortium aims to address critical unmet medical needs in imaging in rheumatology. These include limited access to specific techniques, such as ultrasound outside reference centres and hospitals, and precision gaps in selecting the most suitable treatments for arthritis. AI-supported imaging biomarkers could enhance precision medicine and early diagnosis and enable accessible narratives for clinicians and patients. In the words of AutoPiX Coordinator Prof. Daniel Aletaha from the Medical University of Vienna, “We will bring imaging closer to the practising clinician and the patient, ensuring that it becomes more accessible, interpretable, and clinically relevant for disease management that requires high levels of expertise”.



This project is supported by the Innovative Health Initiative Joint Undertaking (IHI JU) under grant agreement No 101194766. The JU receives support from the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programme and COCIR, EFPIA, Europa Bio, MedTech Europe, Vaccines Europe, MoonLake Immunotherapeutics AG, ROPCA ApS, Scientia Lab, and Collective Minds Radiology AB.

Co-Funded by the European Union, the private members, and those contributing partners of the IHI JU. Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the aforementioned parties. Neither of the aforementioned parties can be held responsible for them.



A significant commitment of the project is to enhance the sustainability and efficiency of imaging. “We have an opportunity to minimize the burden associated with imaging and make the interpretation more efficient and objective,” says the consortiums Project Lead, Rob Janiczek, PhD, Director Clinical Science Imaging, Janssen Research & Development, LLC, a Johnson & Johnson company.

In the long term, the tools developed in AutoPiX have the potential to benefit patients by providing a more precise diagnosis, personalised treatment paths, and reliable assessments of their response to treatments.

The project will span five years and has a total budget of over €20 million. It is funded by the Innovative Health Initiative (IHI), a Public-Private Partnership between the European Union and Europe’s life science industries. This budget is equally divided, with 50% contributed by the EU and 50% from the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industry (EFPIA) and other industry partners.

The AutoPiX project officially started on November 1st, 2024, and the Kick-Off Meeting will take place in Vienna from December 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

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### **Project Key Facts**

*Full Name:* IHI-AUTOPIX - IMAGING FOR PATIENT BENEFIT IN ARTHRITIS

*Start date:* 1st November 2024

*Duration:* 60 months

*Budget:* 21 Mil. €

*Coordinator:* Medizinische Universität Wien, Prof. Dr Daniel Aletaha, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Peter Mandl

*Project Leader:* Johnson & Johnson, Robert Janiczek, PhD

*Website:* <https://www.autopix-project.eu>



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## **Project Partners**

### **Austria**

- Medizinische Universität Wien
- AGES - Österreichische Agentur für Gesundheit und Ernährungssicherheit

### **Belgium**

- Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, an affiliate of Johnson & Johnson
- UCB

### **Denmark**

- Region Hovedstaden
- ROPCA ApS

### **France**

- Scientia Lab

### **Germany**

- Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin
- EURICE – European Research and Project Office GmbH
- Ruhr-Universität Bochum

### **Spain**

- Instituto De Salud Musculoesquelética, SL
- Singularity Biomed, SL

### **Sweden**

- Collective Minds Radiology AB



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**Switzerland**

- Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Vaudois
- European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology
- MoonLake Immunotherapeutics AG
- Novartis Pharma AG

**United Kingdom**

- Queen Mary University of London

**Patient Organisation involved in the project:**

- EULAR (European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology)

**Contact****Project Coordinator:**

Medizinische Universität Wien  
Chair of Rheumatology, Head of Division of Rheumatology  
Prof. Dr Daniel Aletaha  
Assoc. Prof. Dr Peter Mandl  
Phone: +43 40400 43010  
Mail: [daniel.aletaha@meduniwien.ac.at](mailto:daniel.aletaha@meduniwien.ac.at)  
[peter.mandl@meduniwien.ac.at](mailto:peter.mandl@meduniwien.ac.at)  
<https://www.meduniwien.ac.at/web/>

**Project Management:**

EURICE GmbH  
Dr Silke von Sehlen  
Phone: +49 6894 388 13 – 33  
Mail: [s.vonsehlen@eurice.eu](mailto:s.vonsehlen@eurice.eu)  
[www.eurice.eu](http://www.eurice.eu)

**EFPIA Project Lead:**

Janssen Pharmaceutica NV (Johnson & Johnson)  
Director, Digital Measurement Strategy  
Robert Janiczek, PhD  
Phone: +1 610 996 1214  
Mail: [rjanicze@its.jnj.com](mailto:rjanicze@its.jnj.com)  
<https://innovativemedicine.jnj.com/>



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### **About IHI**

The Innovative Health Initiative is a public-private partnership between the European Union and the life sciences industry to advance health research and innovation. Established to address public health needs, IHI funds projects that leverage diverse scientific fields, including pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and medical technology, to improve patient outcomes and enhance the competitiveness of Europe's health industries. The initiative integrates various sectors to develop innovative healthcare solutions that cover prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and disease management.

More here: <https://www.ihl.europa.eu/>

### **About Medical University Wien**

The Medical University of Vienna (MedUni Wien) is a premier medical research and education institution boasting nearly 650 years of history. As the largest medical school in Europe, it serves over 8,000 students and employs over 6,000 staff, including around 3,500 researchers. MedUni Wien supports the University Hospital Vienna, which has 1,742 beds and provides care for over 1 million outpatients and 60,000 inpatients annually. Known for its innovative projects, MedUni Wien emphasises interdisciplinary collaboration with various partners to enhance patient outcomes. The institution operates modern simulation centres for training healthcare professionals and engages in extensive research across fields like computational medicine and molecular biology.

More here: <https://www.meduniwien.ac.at/web/en/>

### **About Janssen Pharmaceutica NV**

Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson, is a key player in the global pharmaceutical industry, based in Beerse, Belgium. Founded by Dr Paul Janssen in 1953, the company has grown into one of the largest pharmaceutical firms worldwide, employing over 10,000 people and operating in 150 countries. Janssen is recognised for its focus on innovation and research and for developing treatments in oncology, immunology, neuroscience, and infectious diseases. Dedicated to addressing unmet medical needs, Janssen collaborates with healthcare professionals and academic institutions to enhance patient care. Its extensive experience in clinical trials and drug development provides



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valuable insights for initiatives like the IHI-funded AutoPiX project. With a strong emphasis on patient-centred care, Janssen aims to advance scientific knowledge and improve health outcomes globally.

More here: <https://www.janssen.com/belgium/>

### **About Johnson & Johnson**

At Johnson & Johnson, they believe health is everything. Their strength in healthcare innovation empowers them to build a world where complex diseases are prevented, treated, and cured, treatments are smarter and less invasive, and solutions are personal. Through their expertise in Innovative Medicine and MedTech, they are uniquely positioned to innovate across the full spectrum of healthcare solutions today to deliver tomorrow's breakthroughs and profoundly impact health for humanity.

More here: <https://www.jnj.com/>



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