

New roadmap provides blueprint to tackle burden of asthma

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Children with asthma use inhalers to relieve some of their symptoms, which include coughing, wheezing, chest tightness and shortness of breath. Credit: Tradimus / Wikimedia commons / [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)

A new roadmap has been published identifying key priority areas that need to be addressed to tackle the burden of asthma.

According to the document from the European Asthma Research and Innovation Partnership (EARIP), a unified approach to research,

development and innovation is urgently needed to address the challenge of [asthma](#) in Europe, improve mortality and reduce morbidity.

Asthma is a chronic disease characterised by recurrent attacks of breathlessness and wheezing which affects around 10% of people in Europe of all ages. It can result in severe asthma attacks, hospital visits and even deaths. The causes are not completely understood and there is no cure.

The editorial is published today (2 May, 2017) in the *European Respiratory Journal* to coincide with World Asthma Day, and for the first time paints a picture of the coordinated approach required by researchers, funders, policy makers, people with asthma and the pharmaceutical industry to reduce the burden of asthma by 40% over the next decade.

EARIP, led by a consortium including the European Lung Foundation and Asthma UK, carried out extensive literature reviews and a series of pan-European consultations to develop the recommendations, which are intended to inform researchers of the most effective ways to address the impact of asthma on the individual, healthcare systems, and national and European economies.

The roadmap identifies key areas requiring investment to enable a reduction in the number of asthma deaths and hospitalisations, and sets out 15 research priorities based on the overarching themes of:

- primary care and public health
- triggers and risk factors for asthma and exacerbations
- personalised medicine
- self-management and adherence

Specifically, the consortium advise that regional and national asthma

programmes must be reviewed across Europe to improve existing programmes, while primary-care professionals also called for the development of an accurate, low-cost tool to quickly diagnose and give information on treatment effectiveness/adherence in primary care settings.

It also recommends that more research is needed into the role of exposure to environmental factors, such as smoking and air pollution, on childhood development and long-term asthma management, in addition to investing more funding in to developing personalised medicines to tackle the complex needs of individual asthma patients.

Kjeld Hansen, a member of the EARIP consortium and co-author of the editorial, commented: "The EARIP roadmap is the first document of its kind to provide recommendations for an integrated approach to research, development and innovation in the field of asthma. We are now calling on EU and national funding bodies to use the roadmap as a basis when establishing their research priorities. If all of these research priority areas were funded and the 15 research questions addressed, asthma outcomes would be transformed and avoidable use of healthcare systems eradicated, resulting in significant financial savings."

The editorial is published alongside a review paper from the EARIP consortium looking at the unmet needs in understanding asthma mechanisms, and an additional editorial on the opportunities for innovation in asthma in Europe.

More information: Sarah Masefield et al, The future of asthma research and development: a roadmap from the European Asthma Research and Innovation Partnership (EARIP), *European Respiratory Journal* (2017). [DOI: 10.1183/13993003.02295-2016](https://doi.org/10.1183/13993003.02295-2016)

Provided by European Lung Foundation

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