



Platform for European Preparedness Against (Re-) emerging Epidemics



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The global health threat posed by infections with epidemic potential grows ever greater. Europe has amongst the best healthcare systems in the world, as well as the world's supreme researchers in this field. Yet, despite years of global preparations for a potentially devastating influenza pandemic or the next SARS-like outbreak our clinical research response to severe infectious disease outbreaks is delayed, isolated and fragmented. Recent epidemics have shown that important pathogenesis and clinical management data mostly came from sites that were already undertaking related clinical studies or from established national or regional research networks. As a result, clinical research in response to severe infectious disease outbreaks has relatively little to no impact on improving patient outcomes and developing high-quality evidence to inform clinical management strategies.

These experiences have demonstrated that unless something is done now to change the approach to clinical research in severe infections, the next epidemic will result in a similar missed opportunity to save lives and advance medical knowledge. PREPARE (Platform for European Preparedness Against (Re-)emerging Epidemics) is to address this shortcoming by establishing a **European clinical research framework for harmonised large-scale clinical research studies on infectious diseases, prepared to rapidly respond to any severe ID outbreak, providing real-time evidence for clinical management of patients and for informing public health responses.**

Covering over 600 primary care sites and over 300 hospital sites in 27 European countries and other European countries and harbouring EU's leading academic research groups on infectious diseases, PREPARE will transform Europe's research response to future severe epidemics or pandemics. By establishing a common European clinical research infrastructure PREPARE will be a one-stop shop for policy-makers, public health agencies, regulators and funders of research into pathogens with pandemic potential. It will achieve this by implementing 'inter-epidemic' research programmes covering large scale observational, interventional and adaptive clinical studies in adults and children, patient-oriented studies into the pathogenesis of infectious diseases and development of novel near-patient diagnostics. An important supporting effort of these 'peace time' studies will be the development and testing of pre-emptive solutions to ethical, administrative, regulatory, logistical and clinical bottlenecks that prevent rapid clinical research responses in the face of new threats. In addition, together with large European societies ERS, ESICM, WONCA Europe, ESCMID and ESWI, PREPARE will invest in education and training of the members of the clinical network and external opinion leaders, funders and policy makers, strengthening our collective capacity and streamlining our future response.

The peacetime studies will train PREPARE in mounting a rapid, coordinated deployment of Europe's elite clinical investigators, within 48 hours of a severe outbreak. As such, PREPARE will be at the basis of establishing a paradigm shift in clinical research in response to severe infectious disease outbreaks.

PREPARE has its roots in the International Severe Acute Respiratory Infection Consortium (**ISARIC**), and builds on established clinical research networks (**GRACE, TRACE, COMBACTE, ESICM, CAPNETZ, PENTA** and **SERGAS**) and pre-clinical FP7 funded research networks (**EMPERIE, ANTIGONE, PREDEMICS, RAPP-ID**). PREPARE is coordinated by Prof. Herman Goossens of the University of Antwerp and is funded by the European Commission's FP7 Programme under grant number 602525.

For more information on PREPARE please visit our website ([www.prepare-europe.eu](http://www.prepare-europe.eu)).