



Project SQUEEZE (Maximising Impact of Prescription Drugs in Rheumatoid Arthritis) aim is optimising the selection of available prescription drugs for rheumatoid arthritis based on individualized biomarkers.

The project focuses on personalised care and seeks to improve patient adherence, ensuring that each patient receives the most promising and safest treatment tailored to their unique needs and preferences.



**Univ.-Prof. Dr. Daniel Aletaha,
MD, MS, MBA**

Project Coordinator, Head of Division of
Rheumatology, Department of Medicine III,
Medical University Vienna



1. Describe your project through key words / key phrases that identify it.

The SQUEEZE project aims to reduce the personal, medical, and societal impact of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) a chronic joint disease affecting approximately 5 million EU citizens by optimising the selection of available prescription drugs based on individualized biomarkers and thereby improving the efficacy and safety of existing treatments.

SQUEEZE brings together leading academic centres with world-class translational and clinical research expertise with patients and small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in a collaborative effort. By focusing on personalised care, the project also seeks to improve patient adherence, ensuring that each patient receives the most promising and safest treatment tailored to their unique needs and preferences.

2. In terms of impact, what are the most concrete results your project has or will achieve?

(a) Help companies to validate and approve biomarkers for arthritis treatment: Our project will support companies in creating advanced biomarkers for RA. These tools will help identify the right treatment for patients, ensuring everyone involved in RA care gets the most benefit. Patients will benefit from reduced progression of disease and reduced time until treatment is effective positively effecting their work and private life.

(b) Make it easier for new diagnostic tools to get approved and recommended for use:

We'll work closely with diagnostic companies, regulators, and health authorities worldwide to get these new tools approved and recommended for use with existing medications. By collaborating with key organizations, we'll ensure these tools are recognized and used effectively.

(c) Provide doctors with better tools to treat patients more efficiently and affordably:

Clinicians and health professionals will be provided with feasible, and ideally point-of-care tools for treatment selection. Precise selection of therapies is key to reduce the dramatic socio- economic impact of RA, and these are therefore key areas in which SQUEEZE will benefit patients, including better targeting of treatments with higher success-rates and reduced side-effects reducing direct (medication) and indirect (productivity) costs related to RA, cost related to prolonged time until remission, or unnecessary (predictable) adverse effects.

3. Please describe your project overall impact at the European level

European citizens benefit from targeted and faster research - Europe's scientific ability to take-up, scale-up and integrate innovation in health care is world-class - resulting in safer, more efficient, cost-effective and affordable tools, technologies and digital solutions for improved (personalised) treatment and monitoring for better patient outcome and well-being, in particular through increasingly shared health resources.

Citizens trust and support the opportunities offered by innovative technologies for health care, based on

expected health outcomes and potential risks involved. No therapy can work without patient trust and support- this central truth is embedded in SQUEEZE.

4. As an applicant, what advice would you have wanted in the Horizon project design process? What support did you receive from National Contact point (NCP) and your organisation, and what improvement of support would you benefit from?

We received valuable support from the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) and the Austrian NCP for the Health cluster, specifically by Astrid Hoebertz. The FFG provided advice, answered specific questions, and assisted with the proposal review.

5. Project's strengths that are considered important and may serve as good practices for other applicants

A standout feature of the SQUEEZE project is its emphasis on patient involvement. Patients are not just participants but active contributors to the research process. Their experiences, feedback, and insights are invaluable in shaping the project's direction and ensuring that the outcomes are truly patient-centered. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of community and empowerment among our team, making everyone feel heard and valued. Our diverse and heterogeneous group includes patients, SME representatives, clinical and data scientists as well as administrative personnel, and we embrace this diversity in each meeting through interactive team culture activities. Partnering with EUTEMA Research Service, we benefit from their expertise in project management, science communication, and meeting facilitation - allowing us as scientists to focus on what we love most - our research.



HNN3.0 (The Cluster 1 Health consortium of NCPs for Horizon Europe) has received funding from the European Union's Horizon EUROPE research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement number 101057279

Visit the full catalogue of all [impact success stories](https://www.healthncp.net/) at our website: <https://www.healthncp.net/>