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WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

08 JULY – 14 JULY 2023

WEIGHT-LOSS DRUGS LINKED TO SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

EU health authorities are investigating potential adverse effects associated with popular weight loss medications, such as the Danish pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk's Ozempic and Saxenda. Reports have emerged suggesting that individuals using these drugs have experienced suicidal thoughts.

The European Medicines Agency (EMA), responsible for overseeing pharmaceutical products in the EU, has confirmed that its safety committee is currently assessing the risk of suicidal thoughts and self-harm among patients who have used weight loss medications containing semaglutide or liraglutide.

The EMA has launched a review based on a report from the Icelandic Medicines Agency, which highlighted three cases where patients had thoughts of suicide or self-injury after taking the aforementioned drugs. The EMA's safety committee will assess whether this review should be expanded to include similar medications. Currently, the EU product information for these drugs does not include suicidal behavior as a known side effect. The news resulted in a 1% decrease in the shares of the Danish drugmaker.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eu-probes-novos-weight-loss-drugs-reports-suicide-risks-bloomberg-news-2023-07-10/>

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR UPCOMING HEALTH THREATS

The European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) have jointly launched HERA Invest, an initiative that aims to allocate €100 million for innovative solutions to future health threats. The funding will be provided through the EU4Health program.

The primary objectives of HERA Invest are to strengthen Europe's strategic autonomy, address market failures in R&D funding, stimulate private investment through public funding, and develop new medical countermeasures to combat health threats. The initiative aims to attract additional private and public investment, providing European companies with the necessary support to invest in innovative solutions.

HERA Invest will specifically target small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) engaged in clinical trials for the development of medical countermeasures (MCMs) that can diagnose, prevent, protect, or treat conditions during public health emergencies. The MCMs must address the top health threats identified by HERA and the member states, which currently include pathogens with high pandemic potential, chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats, and antimicrobial resistance. Under HERA Invest, the EIB will offer venture loans that cover up to 50% of the total project costs. Typically, the EIB will invest between €15 and €30 million per project.

Source: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/health-consumers/news/commission-announces-additional-funding-to-boost-preparedness-for-health-threats/>

THE ONGOING AVIAN INFLUENZA AS A POTENTIAL RISK TO HUMANS

As many as three global health and food agencies warned this week that the continued rise in bird flu outbreaks around the world has raised concerns that the virus could more easily adapt to infect humans. At the same time, they have called on all nations to intensify their efforts in monitoring viruses and promptly identify any cases of human infection.

Earlier this year, a new strain of H5N1 avian influenza, which is highly contagious among wild birds, rapidly spread to new geographic regions, infecting and killing various mammalian species and raising fears of a pandemic among humans. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) has so far reported only a few cases of infection in people who had close contact with sick birds. For the most part, the infection was mild.

The WHO, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Organization for Animal Health, has urged countries to work together across various sectors to safeguard both animals and human populations. In recent years, approximately ten countries have reported instances of avian influenza outbreaks affecting both land and marine mammals. These outbreaks have impacted farmed mink in Spain, as well as seals, sea lions in Peru and Chile, and the United States.

Source: <https://pulsmedycyny.pl/gwaltowne-wybuchy-ognisk-ptasiej-grypy-zwiekszaja-ryzyko-zakazenia-ludzi-ostrzega-who-1190399>

Thank you for your attention!

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