

Friday, 13 January 2017 12:25 GMT

KEYWORDS : *DIABETES DIGITAL PARTNERSHIP*

Novo Nordisk developing digital tools for diabetes with Glooko - interview

by Thomas Meek

LONDON, Jan 13 (APM) - Danish pharma firm Novo Nordisk is working with California-based tech firm Glooko to develop digital tools to support people with diabetes.

Speaking to APM in a phone interview on Friday, Novo's senior vice president, strategy, access and marketing, Christian Kanstrup, said the collaboration has both a short-term focus - to bring a new product to market in 2017 - and a longer-term focus to integrate with Novo's existing digital health work with IBM Watson Health.

Kanstrup said the short-term offering will build on Glooko's existing platform, which is a remote monitoring tool to track key data related to diabetes, such as blood glucose levels and diet. It involves a device that can sync directly to an app on a patient's mobile device and can be integrated with certain fitness apps.

Novo will use its experience as a major player in the diabetes field to build on Glooko's work and enhance this tool to deliver personalised, digital services to support people with diabetes in areas including treatment adherence and blood glucose management.

Kanstrup said it was likely this was something that was going to be provided to healthcare professionals to work on with their patients rather than directly to patients.

Long-term goals

For the more long-term aspect of the collaboration, Kanstrup said the aim is to integrate the Glooko offering into Novo's digital health platform, which the company is developing with IBM Watson Health to provide personalised advice to people living with diabetes based on cognitive computation capabilities.

Novo is also aiming to build on its own connected devices, which can capture and transfer information on insulin dose, and are currently being developed.

"So that will be a more comprehensive joint offering, hopefully allowing patients to feel much more liberated from their diabetes," said Kanstrup.

"At the same time it give us the opportunity for accessing a vast amount of real-world data from our products in a real-life setting which we can use in discussions with payers, and also guide us in our activities in general."

Kanstrup said Novo is currently discussing what this more long-term project will look like and how it will be accessed by patients.

"It's a matter of ensuring that it's simple and accessible, but at the same time also of course this needs to be done in the right way."

The project could also tie in directly to specific Novo products, for example providing information on dose guidance for certain insulins.

"It's not like we do digital health just to do digital health: we do it to support better utilisation of products, because ultimately it is the products that will enable people with diabetes to get better control and a better life."

Both short and long-term ambitions cover type 1 and type 2 diabetes, said Kanstrup.

Need for digital tools

Explaining why Novo is working to bring digital tools to support people with diabetes, Kanstrup said that today less than 10% with diabetes live a life free of complications.

"So even though we have really great products on the market, patients are still not in adequate control. So more is needed.

"As a leading diabetes company we have the obligation of helping people with diabetes get in better control. All that's happening in the digital space, with rapid development of technologies, rapid evolution of electronic medical records in many parts of the world - that opens up new opportunities for supporting patients."

Real-world data

These tools can also help collect real-world data on the effectiveness of diabetes products, which Kanstrup said are increasingly in demand from payers in healthcare systems.

"This of course is another way of generating this real-world data that can help us engage in the right dialogue with payers and also inform us how our products work in many different settings so we can enter into innovative and value-based contracting etc."

He added: "Five years ago you had a randomised controlled trial; now you need to have real-world evidence on how your products actually work. And all of this is then supported by fairly rapid technology development, which gives us opportunities that we didn't have five years ago."

tm/clg

thomas.meek@apmnews.com
[51315] 13/01/2017 12:25 GMT

©2005-2017 APM Health Europe.