

French startup raises €1.8m to combat loneliness in chronic disease with help from EIT Health Investor Network

- Wefight's 'Vik the Virtual Companion' to be made available for total of 33 chronic diseases
- EIT Health Investor Network now open for start-up applications

French start-up Wefight, announced that they have raised €1.8m to accelerate the development of their virtual companion technology, which aims to combat loneliness in those with chronic diseases. The technology, named 'Vik', has already been made available to patients living with breast cancer, depression, asthma and migraine, however many more patients are expected to benefit from the technology.

One third of adults in European Union member states are living with a chronic disease, and studies show feelings of loneliness are high in patients living with such conditions.^{1,2} Loneliness has a significant negative impact in chronic disease and can lead to poor disease management, depression, as well as higher and longer rates of hospital admissions.³

"Loneliness in chronic disease is a significant concern as it has a huge impact on those living with such conditions; as well their families, health systems and society as a whole," said Dr. Kurt Höller, Director of Business Creation at EIT Health.

"We have an overwhelming number of people living with chronic diseases in Europe, and this is continually growing in line with our ageing population. In order to help people with chronic diseases live as well as possible, we must be smart about how we approach disease management. Artificial intelligence has the potential to meet the needs of patients without adding further burden to already struggling health services, and we are proud to support WeFight in their ambitious vision for their technology. The EIT Health investor network connects European health-oriented investors with promising start-ups to encourage cross-border financing and co-investments," continued Höller.

Wefight was created in 2017 by Benoît Brouard and Pierre Nectoux, who combined their knowledge of healthcare and technical expertise to create Vik - a virtual companion who answers patient questions related to their condition, treatment and care pathway. The Wefight team aims to take 'Vik' to 30 more disease types by 2020; and will utilise the funds raised, in part, through the EIT Health Investor Network to help them achieve their goal. The funds secured through the EIT Health network were provided by Investir&+, Angels Santé, Business Angels des Grandes Écoles, and MELIES Business Angels.

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"Our team is proud to have convinced investors who share our values and who will bring their expertise to help us increase Vik's social impact," said Benoît Brouard, Co-Founder and Director of Wefight. "We wanted to meet the needs of patients and address caregivers' needs. To achieve this, we included patient associations in the development of Vik from the very beginning. This allowed us to understand the daily concerns of patients and tailor Vik to their needs," Brouard continued.

Apply to the EIT Health Investor Network to receive funding of over €500,000

The EIT Health Investor Network, which is now accepting applications from new start-ups, is a pan-European network that connects promising health start-ups with private and institutional investors for financing and co-investment. Through the network, start-ups seeking early-stage private equity funding above €500,000 have the opportunity to be introduced to more than 35 early stage venture funds, family offices and institutional investors, as well as 800 private business angels. To learn more about the EIT Health Investor Network or apply, please visit www.eithealth.eu/investor-network.

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About EIT Health

EIT Health is a network of best-in-class health innovators backed by the EU. We collaborate across borders to deliver new solutions that can enable European citizens to live longer, healthier lives.

As Europeans tackle the challenge of increasing chronic diseases and multi-morbidity, and seek to realise the opportunities that technology offers to move beyond conventional approaches to treatment, prevention and healthy lifestyles, we need thought leaders, innovators and efficient ways to bring innovative healthcare solutions to market.

EIT Health addresses these needs. We connect all relevant healthcare players across European borders – making sure to include all sides of the "knowledge triangle", so that innovation can happen at the intersection of research, education and business for the benefit of citizens.

EIT Health: Together for healthy lives in Europe.

For more information visit: www.eithealth.eu.

About Wefight

Wefight was created in 2017 by Benoît Brouard (Doctor in Pharmacy, former intern of Paris hospitals) and Pierre Nectoux (Engineer from CentraleSupélec).

They combined their knowledge of healthcare and their technical expertise to create Vik. Vik is a virtual companion who answers all patients' questions related to their illness, treatment or patient pathway.

Vik comes from a simple observation: patients are more and more alone against their disease. This loneliness results in a lack of information that is a source of complications and re-hospitalisations. Today Vik is available in several diseases: breast cancer, asthma, migraine and depression.

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For more information visit:

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