

# Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc. announces digital innovation partnership in multiple sclerosis with Innodem Neurosciences

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- *Clinical trial will study new technology that tracks eye movement to assist diagnosis and monitor disease progression*

**Dorval, Quebec, October 5, 2021** — Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc. (Novartis) is pleased to announce today a multi-year partnership agreement with Innodem Neurosciences to conduct a breakthrough clinical trial to help people living with multiple sclerosis (MS).

Novartis will fund a clinical trial using Innodem's artificial intelligence (AI)-powered, proprietary, eye tracking software technology, capable of capturing and analyzing Eye Movement Biomarkers (EMBs) and Gaze Mapping Biomarkers (GMBs) to assist a clinician's diagnosis and monitor disease progression. Digital EMB and GMB tests are non-invasive and can be completed in minutes in the clinic's waiting room or by the patient at home. Remote self-testing could contribute to alleviating wait times for appointments and ease pressures on the health system, as well as be an advantage for people living with MS residing in rural areas who may not have easy access to a neurologist.

Over the course of the clinical trial, people living with MS will test twice a month, and the data will be correlated to assist clinicians in detecting subtle changes indicative of disease progression and that may not show up using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

"At Novartis, we are committed to helping solve Canada's biggest health challenges, through innovative partnerships like the one we have with Innodem," said Andrea Marazzi, Country Pharma Organization Head, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc. "Canada has one of the highest rates of MS in the world. We joined forces with Innodem because we believe their eye movement tracking technology can help more rapidly identify disease progression and, in turn, improve management of MS. We are looking forward to seeing the results of the clinical trial and confirming the significance of this technology, granting more people living with MS and physicians access to this innovative software."

MS is a chronic autoimmune disease affecting the central nervous system where the immune system attacks parts of the brain and spinal cord, specifically the myelin, which is the protective covering that surrounds our neurons. An estimated 90,000 people live with MS in Canada, and it is three times more common in women than in men.<sup>1</sup>

"Current eye tracking infrared technology is costly and not easily accessible, particularly in remote communities," said Dr. Étienne de Villers-Sidani, Cognitive Neurologist, Main Founder and CEO, Innodem. "By partnering with Novartis on this study we're confident we can demonstrate the technology is efficient, accessible and scalable to people living with MS in Canada and across the world."

## About Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc.

Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc., a leader in the healthcare field, is committed to the discovery,

development and marketing of innovative products to improve the well-being of all Canadians. In 2020, the company invested \$45 million in research and development in Canada. Located in Dorval, Quebec, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc. employs approximately 1,000 people in Canada and is an affiliate of Novartis AG, which provides innovative healthcare solutions that address the evolving needs of patients and societies. The company prides itself on its commitment to diversity and to nurturing an inclusive and inspiring environment. Novartis is recognized as a Great Place to Work<sup>®</sup>, ranked among the Top 50 Best Workplaces<sup>™</sup> in the country and is proudly named on the 2021 Best Workplaces<sup>™</sup> for Women in Canada and Best Workplace<sup>™</sup> for Mental Wellness lists. For further information, please consult <https://www.novartis.com/ca-en/>.

## About Innodem Neurosciences

Founded in 2016, Innodem Neurosciences has developed patented mobile digital biomarking technology of neurodegenerative diseases such as Multiple Sclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and related disorders, Frontotemporal Dementia and related disorders and Cancer-Related Cognitive Impairment ("chemo brain"). This novel eye-tracking and cognition testing technology is embodied in a HIPAA/PIPEDA compliant system consisting of an intuitive tablet application connected to a cloud-based AI infrastructure. The app is made up of a series of tasks that are completed in minutes, where a user's eye movement is recorded in data sets called Eye Movement Biomarkers (EMBs) and Gaze Mapping Biomarkers (GMBs). Innodem's core team, led by cognitive neurologist and CEO Dr. Etienne de Villers-Sidani, is composed of an intersectional group of neuroscientists, software engineers, data scientists, healthcare professionals and serial entrepreneurs. The company's mission is to provide easier ways to do remote testing for all stages of neurodegenerative diseases and cancer-related cognitive impairment to improve quality of care and patient outcomes, at unseen levels of user-friendliness and cost-effectiveness for the global health system. For further information, please consult <https://www.innodemneurosciences.com>.

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## Reference

1. Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada. About MS. Available at: [mssociety.ca/about-ms](https://mssociety.ca/about-ms). Accessed on October 4, 2021.

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