



# Danish Diabetes Academy

Annual Report 2022

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## Executive summary

For the year 2022, we wish to highlight the following:

- The DDA organised 31 PhD and postdoctoral courses, symposia and webinars, which attracted over 1,000 participants from universities, university hospitals and the life science industry in Denmark and abroad and received high participant satisfaction rates.
- The DDA organised 15 networking and collaboration activities, which attracted around 400 participants from universities, university hospitals and the life science industry in Denmark and abroad and received high participant satisfaction rates.
- The DDA collaborated with the Danish Cardiovascular Academy (DCA) and the Danish Data Science Academy (DDSA) on various educational and networking activities.
- The DDA released 13 podcast episodes in the 'Postdoc Talking: From Research to Society' and 'Postdoc Talking: From Science to Society' series.
- The DDA reached 4,200 followers on LinkedIn and increased its follower count on Twitter and Instagram by almost 30% as compared with 2021.
- The DDA and DDA-funded researchers reported 103 unique publications, 23 new collaborations, 216 dissemination activities and further funding totalling DKK 26.3 million.
- The DDA submitted an application to the Novo Nordisk Foundation (NNF) for the establishment of a new academy, the Danish Diabetes and Endocrine Academy (DDEA).
- The Novo Nordisk Foundation made a 5-year grant of DKK 195 million for the establishment of the DDEA (2023-2027).
- The Novo Nordisk Foundation appointed the new DDEA Board of Directors (BoD).
- Following a call for applications and nominations, the DDEA BoD set up three new bodies: a Grant Review Committee, an Advisory Board and a Committee for Education.

In relation to the establishment of the DDEA, the DDEA will build on past results by DDA from 2012-2022 to promote research excellence within the entire field of endocrinology. The overall end goal is to improve the prevention and treatment of diabetes and endocrine diseases.

The transformation of the current DDA organisation into a new DDEA organisation entails the appointment of a new Secretariat, an expansion of the Board of Directors and the establishment of three new bodies: the DDEA Committee for Education, the DDEA Advisory Board and the DDEA Grant Review Committee. The process was initiated in autumn 2022 and continued into 2023.

Tore Christiansen

Managing Director

## Strategy and governance

### Mission

The DDA's mission is to educate and train the next generation of researchers in the field of diabetes.

### Strategy

The DDA aims, in collaboration with academia, hospitals and the life science industry, to strengthen the research training available to PhD students and postdocs within the field of diabetes. Further, the DDA aims to serve as a national hub within diabetes, unifying academia, hospitals and the life science industry in Denmark in order to strengthen educational activities and talent development within the area. Finally, the DDA aims to recruit outstanding national and international PhD students, postdocs and visiting professors within the field of diabetes in open and free competition.

The DDA operates on a 'bottom-up' approach: a close and strong collaboration between the DDA, national and international universities, university hospitals and the life science industry is a prerequisite for the development of the educational and talent development activities.

The strategy for the educational and talent development programme includes the incorporation into interdisciplinary research of elements of basic, translational, clinical, epidemiological and qualitative research, pedagogic learning approaches and teaching methods.

In aiming for the highest possible international standards, it is a priority that speakers are nationally and internationally recognised experts and that several of the activities are organised in collaboration with researchers affiliated with research institutes outside Denmark.

### Organisation

The focus for the DDA in 2022 was to carry on the activities within education and networking and to establish a close and strong collaboration with the two other academies: the Danish Cardiovascular Academy (DCA) and the Danish Data Science Academy (DDSA). With the second 5-year funding period ending in 2022, the Novo Nordisk Foundation (NNF) tasked the DDA with applying for a potential continuation and development of the DDA into a Danish Diabetes and Endocrine Academy (DDEA). Thus, the DDA has focused on applying for support in establishing the DDEA. After a peer review process, the NNF Board of Directors approved the application and awarded a 5-year grant (2023-2027) of DKK 195 million for the establishment of the DDEA. In the autumn, the DDA organisation began the transition to the DDEA, which involved the appointment of a new Secretariat and an expansion of the membership of the Board of Directors to encompass broad and classical endocrine expertise. Further, it entailed dissolving the existing DDA bodies and committees and rebuilding them with the participation of members with broad expertise within diabetes, metabolism and classical endocrine research.

## Budget and accounts

In 2022, the grant budget amounted to DKK 21,236,000. The DDA had a surplus of DKK 4.21 million, mainly due to individual postdoc grant recipients having stopped before their project period was over and the remaining funds having been returned to the DDA. Another reason for the surplus was that COVID-19 compensation costs and additional maternity costs paid out to grant recipients were lower than expected.

## Educational activities and talent development

In 2022, the DDA organised 31 PhD and postdoctoral courses, symposia and webinars, which attracted around 1,050 participants from universities, university hospitals and the life science industry in Denmark and abroad. Of the 31 activities, 12 (42%) were online or hybrid activities. In general, the events received excellent satisfaction scores for scientific content and the composition of the programme (mean score 91.9%). Further, participants rated the opportunity to create new networks at the events at 99.5%.

The 31 activities included 7 PhD courses, 4 courses for both PhD students and postdoctoral fellows, 1 postdoctoral course, 8 symposia and 11 webinars.

The DDA initiated a close collaboration with the DCA on two residential PhD courses.

Highlights of the year were the DDA Postdoc Summit, the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the DDA PhD Summer School, the 3 courses on R programming (beginner, intermediate and advanced), the cardio-metabolic PhD course organised in collaboration with the DCA and the Symposium on Diabetes In and After Pregnancy.

## Networking and collaboration activities

In 2022, the DDA organised 15 networking and collaboration activities across disciplines, which attracted around 400 participants from universities, university hospitals and the life science industry in Denmark and abroad. Of the 15 activities, 5 (33%) were online or hybrid activities. In general, the activities received excellent satisfaction scores from participants for scientific content and the composition of the programme (mean score 80%). Further, participants rated the opportunity to create new networks at the events at 100%.

The 15 activities comprised 11 workshops and 4 networking activities on a variety of topics within diabetes research, data and digitalisation and trends and developments in health, as well as general networking events at international diabetes conferences, a debate at the People's Meeting on Bornholm and the DDA Annual Day.

The DDA organised its first collaboration activity with the DDSA: a workshop on a data science challenge for early-career researchers in the data science field and the diabetes and metabolism field.

Highlights of the year were the EASD networking event organised in collaboration with the German Center for Diabetes Research, the data science challenge organised in collaboration with the DDSA, and the DDA Annual Day highlighting the end of the DDA (2012-2022) and the beginning of the new DDEA (2023-2027).

## Recruitment and grant activities

In 2022, the DDA did not award any PhD scholarships, postdoctoral fellowships or visiting professorships.

At the DDA Annual Day, the DDA awarded two prizes to recognise excellence, innovation, passion and commitment in Danish diabetes research and to acknowledge outstanding achievement, success and engagement in diabetes research education and training of early-career researchers.

The DDA-Funded Scientist Award was presented to Karoline Kragelund Nielsen, Senior Researcher and Team Leader at the Steno Diabetes Center Copenhagen, for showing great potential to be a world-class researcher within the field of gestational diabetes.

The DDA Research Education and Networking Award was presented to Luke Johnston, Clinical Researcher and Team Leader at the Steno Diabetes Center Aarhus, for his contributions to improving DDA activities within education and talent development in developing and organising the highly recognised courses on R programming.

## Communications

In 2022, the DDA maintained its weekly activities on LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram. The number of followers on LinkedIn (4,272 as of 31.12.2022), Twitter (1,904 as of 31.12.2022) and Instagram (620 as of 31.12.2022) increased by 39%, 27.7% and 27.8% respectively as compared with 2021.

In 2022, the DDA released six podcast episodes in the series 'Postdocs Talking: From Research to Society' focusing on how academic researchers can build bridges between science and several important sectors of society: language when engaging people with diabetes, funding for research, innovation and its relation to industry, education and social media, and art in scientific representation.

Further, the DDA released seven podcast episodes in the series 'Postdocs Talking: From Science to Society' highlighting experts in diabetes and metabolism research with Nordic ties whose work connects to a societal perspective. In total, the two podcast series were downloaded more than 1,300 times in 2022.

## Scientific publications, collaborations, dissemination and further funding

In 2022, DDA-funded researchers reported 103 unique publications, 23 new collaborations, 216 dissemination activities and further funding totalling 26.3 million DKK to ResearchFish.

### Scientific publications

DDA-funded researchers reported 103 unique publications attributed to their DDA grants (predominantly in peer-reviewed journals). This is an increase of 32% as compared with 2021.

### Collaborations

The number of new unique collaborations across sectors and disciplines established by the DDA and DDA-funded researchers in 2022 was 23.

### Dissemination activities

The number of dissemination activities reported by the DDA or DDA-funded researchers in 2022 was 216. The majority of the disseminations were talks at national and international workshops and conferences, podcast and press releases

### Further funding

In 2022, DDA-funded researchers reported additional funding of 26.3 million DKK.

## Evaluation of success criteria

In 2022, the DDA fulfilled the success criteria relating to the number of national and international PhD courses, symposia and workshops organised in collaboration with national research institutions and research institutes outside Denmark and across disciplines. Further, the DDA fulfilled the success criteria relating to participant satisfaction with the scientific programmes at the educational and networking events and the Executive Management Team's performance in organising these events. The DDA also fulfilled the success criteria relating to the percentage increase in DDA membership, the percentage increase in the DDA's social media following and the additional external funding secured by DDA-funded PhD students and postdocs. The DDA did not meet the success criterion relating to the percentage of internationally recognised experts from outside Denmark among teachers and speakers on DDA PhD courses, seminars and symposia (44%). Further, the success criteria relating to participation in Horizon Europe Framework applications and recruitment of PhD students through the Framework were not met.

A number of the success criteria are impossible to evaluate or measure until all PhD students and Postdoc fellows supported in the period 2018-2021 have completed their projects, which is expected to happen in 2026-2027. Thus, to enable evaluation of the success criteria and the impact of the DDA over a longer time period, the DDA will continue to collect data for some of the success criteria in 2023-2027.

## Future focus

The new DDEA BoD will set the direction for the DDEA organisation and strategy. To determine strategic priorities for the activities and ensure equitable development of the entire diabetes and endocrinology field, the DDEA will, in collaboration with its stakeholders, carry out a background analysis in 2023 of the current diabetes and endocrine landscape in Denmark. This analysis will identify current needs in individual areas of diabetes and endocrinology, including areas needing (additional) support, collaborations or infrastructure in order to improve or to build on existing high quality and develop further.

The DDEA educational and networking programme will strive to ensure relevance to the Danish diabetes and – in particular – endocrine research environment. Further, it will include the four strategic themes of the DDEA: digitalisation and new technologies, translational research, strategic partnerships, and public involvement and outreach. Further, it will include activities that can be organised in collaboration with the DDSA and DCA. The Secretariat announced the first call for applications for PhD scholarships, postdoctoral fellowships and visiting professorships on 8 December 2022. All qualified applications will undergo external international review by the DDEA Grant Review Committee. The DDEA BoD will decide on the grant allocation at a BoD meeting in late spring 2023.

In relation to communication activities, the DDEA will continue to focus on high presence on social media and will continue to disseminate early-career researchers' research and their ideas through podcast episodes. Further, the DDEA will engage in public outreach through an event at the People's Meeting on Bornholm with a view to facilitating dialogue between early-career researchers and the public.