

Boehringer Ingelheim joins d•HEALTH Barcelona to foster healthcare innovation

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Boehringer Ingelheim, one of the top 20 pharmaceutical companies in the world, has become a partner of Design Health Barcelona (d•HEALTH Barcelona), the postgraduate program promoted by Biocat to train future innovators and entrepreneurs in the healthcare sector.

Following the biodesign methodology created by Stanford University, the participants in d•HEALTH Barcelona experience a complete innovation cycle. The multidisciplinary teams live for two months in immersion in a major hospital in Barcelona to detect needs that could be turned into a new product or service.

Design Health Barcelona (d•HEALTH Barcelona) is a postgraduate program promoted by Biocat to train innovators and entrepreneurs in the medical technology sector. Over the course of 9 months, the students identify unmet clinical needs and develop a solution to meet them. The program, which is considered one of the top health innovation accelerators in Europe, starts its 7th edition in January 2020

During the program, the participants in d•HEALTH Barcelona work on the design, prototype, business model and search for financing for the solution developed. In parallel, they also learn about medicine, medical technologies, business and skills in fields like design thinking and creative leadership, with more than 70 international experts from Boston, Stanford and other places.

In the current edition, one of the student teams did its clinical immersion in the Pneumology Unit at the Hospital Germans Trias I Pujol in Badalona (Barcelona). This gave Boehringer Ingelheim, which has been committed to treating respiratory diseases since it was founded over 30 years ago, firsthand knowledge of the real unmet needs of both the patients and the healthcare professionals involved in this service.

“Our participation in the d•HEALTH Barcelona program has been a very positive experience which has enabled us to learn what patients and professionals in these specialities need, as well as to generate innovative solutions that can have

therapeutic value and offer social benefits,” explained Dr Holger J. Gellermann, managing director of the Medicine and RDI Department at Boehringer Ingelheim Spain.

Furthermore, Dr Gellermann stressed the importance of launching health innovation programs that involve professionals in different fields, as d-HEALTH Barcelona does. “This commitment from Biocat and the entities involved, like Boehringer Ingelheim, enables scientific knowledge to be generated that adds value and benefits patients all over the world. We are extremely grateful to have been part of the multidisciplinary team that participated in this pioneering initiative, and we hope this is only the beginning of a long-term partnership”.

d-HEALTH Barcelona is promoted by Biocat, the entity that promotes the life sciences and healthcare sector in Catalonia, and it is considered one of the top health innovation accelerators in Europe according to the classifications of Digitalhealth.careers, Mobile World Capital, Tech EU and HealthStartup.

95% of alumni are working in the healthcare sector

The students in each edition of d-HEALTH Barcelona detect an average of more than 1,000 unmet clinical needs, 65% of which are potential opportunities for new businesses, while 35% are possibilities for improvements in the hospitals themselves. Every year, the program impacts more than 1,100 people in the Catalan healthcare ecosystem, and 95% of the participants who have gone through the first six editions of d-HEALTH Barcelona have found innovation jobs in hospitals, pharmaceutical and medical technology companies, research centres, consultancies and other professional services.

d-HEALTH Barcelona is part of the Innovation Fellowships program of EIT Health, the leading European health consortium, which allows students to engage in international mobility with other programs and to be part of the extensive European network of EIT Alumni once they finish the program. d-HEALTH Barcelona is currently selecting the students for its 7th edition, which will launch in January 2020.