

# Reimagining asthma care: how data and digital could bring asthma management goals within reach

Bertrand Bodson explains the Novartis strategy for digital innovation in asthma care.

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Asthma affects 358 million people globally and, despite available therapies, many patients' lives are still impacted by the disease.<sup>1,2</sup> Uncontrolled asthma can cause a significant personal, health and financial burden to those living with it. Bertrand Bodson, the Chief Digital Officer of Novartis, has had asthma for over 10 years. He shares his experience of living with asthma, and how this drives his work at Novartis to reimagine medicine using the power of data and digital.

## My journey with asthma



Around 10 years ago, I began noticing symptoms but, as is the case for many patients with asthma, the road to diagnosis was difficult and it was harder still to finally achieve optimal treatment and management. My exacerbations could last for days, I was short of breath and I was coughing a lot. Because my symptoms would come in peaks and troughs, I would often forget to take my treatment, especially if I wasn't experiencing symptoms. Eventually, I found a specialist and a treatment regimen that worked for me to achieve long-term management.

The length of my journey to get diagnosed and find the right treatment made a big impression on me. My case was not unusual; for many patients with asthma, it can be difficult to get a diagnosis.<sup>3</sup> People with asthma can have a tendency to adjust their lifestyle around their symptoms, but I would really encourage them to persevere and collaborate with their physician to find solutions that help them achieve their health goals.

## The promise of data and digital

Looking at asthma and beyond, at Novartis we have the ambition to use data to better identify subsets of patients for whom a particular treatment will work best and bring effective medicine to patients earlier in the course of their disease. To make this a reality, we are working on strengthening our data infrastructure, building our architecture and rethinking how we engage with patients.

My own experience with asthma has taught me that we need to reimagine the way we are addressing the disease, and it's my mission – both as a patient and a digital innovator – to find new ways to do that.

**Bertrand Bodson**, Chief Digital Officer, Novartis

We are also partnering with technology companies to find and co-develop innovative digital solutions to existing healthcare problems. Among others, healthcare access, improved diagnosis and personalized disease management are all aspects of healthcare that we hope to reimagine using emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.

These changes can be made on a large scale, where digital health offerings can improve the efficiency of whole healthcare systems, and on an individual level by supporting physicians and including patients in the personalized management of diseases, such as asthma.

On the other hand, once patients are on their treatment plan, technology can also help to ensure they are receiving maximum benefit from it. There is a great opportunity for patients with asthma to use new digital technologies and work together with physicians to increase adherence to their prescribed medication, helping them to achieve their asthma management goals.

## Helping to bring asthma management goals within reach

There are certain rules of thumb in asthma management, such as following your treatment plan and consulting with your physician, which are generally advised. But as I mentioned, finding the right specialist and the right regimen isn't always quick or easy, and everyone's path is different. My own experience with asthma has taught me that we need to reimagine the way we are addressing the disease, and it's my mission – both as a patient and a digital innovator – to find new ways to do that.

This is a shared ambition at Novartis and a part of what makes working in this industry so exciting – you can feel the pride of purpose and the hope that the work we are doing across the company will make a meaningful impact on the lives of patients like me.

Learn how #Novartis is using data and digital to #reimaginemedicine for #asthma patients

## Reimagining medicine with Novartis

We aim to become the leading medicines company powered by data science and digital technologies.

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References:

1. GBD 2015 Chronic Respiratory Disease Collaborators. Global, regional, and national deaths, prevalence, disability-adjusted life years, and years lived with disability for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma, 1990–2015: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2015. *Lancet Respir Med* 2017;5(9):691–701.
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#### **List of links present in page**

1. <https://prod1.novartis.com/stories/reimagining-asthma-care-how-data-and-digital-could-bring-asthma-management-goals-within-reach>
2. <https://prod1.novartis.com/tags/category/patient-perspectives>
3. <https://prod1.novartis.com/data-and-digital>
4. <https://www.aafa.org/media/1684/my-life-with-asthma-in-2017-survey-findings-report.pdf>
- 5.