

## Chiesi and Hephaï join forces to develop AI educational tool to improve inhaler use

- New digital platform will provide patients living with asthma or COPD with virtual coach
- Helping patients with effective inhaler use - avoiding problems arising from incorrect use
- Recognized Class I medical device - multi-device application to suit patients' lifestyle

**Paris, France, March 29, 2021** – Chiesi, an international pharmaceutical company that operates across the entire value chain, and Hephaï, a French start-up developing an AI-based digital education platform, today announce their collaboration in developing a digital solution to support improved inhaler use. The platform is designed for patients with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD); it aims to help them better control their condition. The app will be available on Apple and Android in 2022.

Both asthma and COPD are frequently treated with medication taken via inhalers; patients have to make regular use of inhalers in order to take their medication correctly. Errors in inhaler use may occur if the patient struggles to use it, or if they are not yet accustomed to it. [Research](#) shows that 30-40% of patients with COPD do not use their inhalers correctly<sup>1</sup>. This can have a direct impact on how they take the medication; reducing its benefits.

Specialist pulmonologists and GPs do not always have the time to monitor inhaler use in patients or offer full instructions on comprehensive use. Also, patients are not always given thorough guidance when they collect their inhaler from a pharmacy. As a result, many are unaware of the correct techniques to use their inhaler effectively, as they lack professional training or advice, or they may simply forget what they have been told.

As a result, an educational approach is needed to provide step-by-step instructions on how to correctly use inhalers. This is why Chiesi and Hephaï have come together to work on an AI virtual coaching program; to provide patients with a free digital education tool, which comes with a recommendation from the prescribing doctor or pharmacist.

This tool, which is recognized as a Class I medical device, is a multi-device application which can be installed on tablets, smartphones and PCs. The patients record themselves using the inhaler, the app analyses the movements and sounds they make in real time, it can then explain any errors they may have made and provide suggestions on how to improve their technique. Hephaï's digital educational platform makes it possible to assess whether the inhaler medication has been taken correctly. If there are problems, the tool can establish a corrective process and/or inform the patient's doctor.

"Following more than ten years of research into inhaled medications prescribed for asthma and COPD, it became clear that patients living with these respiratory conditions would benefit from a virtual coach to help them understand and learn the best practices for inhaler use. Incorrect usage presents a real risk to successful treatment of respiratory conditions," said Valéry Trosini-Desert, pulmonologist at the Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital (Paris, France) and founder of Hephaï. "We are excited to be working with Chiesi, it will allow us to provide a reliable and user-friendly education tool for patients, GPs and pharmacists."

1. Molimard M, Raheison C, Lignot S, et al. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease exacerbation and inhaler device handling: real-life assessment of 2935 patients. Eur Respir J 2017

“Chiesi was already well aware of the need for asthma and COPD patients to be able to use their inhalers effectively, this partnership is further evidence of our commitment to respiratory medicine, a key area for us,” said Dr. Marie-Ange Peretti, medical director at Chiesi France. “We offer solutions for both dry powder and metered dose inhalers, in order to meet the needs of patients and doctors alike. Chiesi is a family-owned company with a personal touch and a focus on innovation. We have a presence in 26 countries.”

A total of 299 million people worldwide live with asthma or COPD.

###

#### About Chiesi

Based in Parma, Italy, Chiesi Farmaceutici is an international research-focused group with over 85 years’ experience in the pharmaceutical sector operating in 30 countries. It conducts research and develops and markets innovative drugs for respiratory treatment, special care and rare diseases. The Group’s research and development centre is based in Parma and works alongside six other important research and development centres in France, the US, Canada, China, the UK and Sweden to promote its pre-clinical, clinical and regulatory programmes. The Group employs more than 6,000 people. Chiesi became a certified B Corp in 2019: as such it is required by law to consider the impact of its decisions on its employees, clients, suppliers, communities and the environment. This global movement views business as a force for good. The company is also committed to becoming carbon neutral, generating zero impact on the environment, by the end of 2035.

[www.chiesi.com](http://www.chiesi.com)

#### About Hephaï

Hephaï develops an AI-based digital education platform to support patients in correctly using their inhalers prescribed for asthma and COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), in order to maximize effectiveness.

Considering the sheer variety of inhaler-based treatments available, there is a significant lack of information on the best techniques for patients to use, resulting in 30-40% of them not knowing how to use their inhaler properly. These critical errors in use are exacerbated by the fact that doctors and pulmonologists have very little time to dedicate to monitoring inhaler use. As a result, the treatment is less effective and there are potentially significant negative health consequences. Hephaï uses AI to automatically assess the patient’s inhaler technique and to provide a virtual coach that can guide them through the process for correctly using an inhaler, as well as providing feedback and alerting the patient’s doctor if necessary.

Hephaï’s goal is to improve care for respiratory conditions by minimizing the risks associated with incorrect use and to gather Real-World Evidence (RWE) on the use of ready-to-use inhaler medication.

Hephaï builds upon ten years of prior research into inhaled medication prescribed for asthma and COPD and on the success of the ZEPHIR guide. Its app is expected to be launched in 2022 on smartphones, tablets and PCs, in partnership with pharmaceutical companies.

Founded in 2019 in Paris, France, by Valéry Trosini-Desert, Serge Kinkingéhun and Thomas Similowski, the company is incubated at Paris Biotech Santé. Its partners include AP-HP, Bpifrance and Microsoft.

[www.hephaï.eu](http://www.hephaï.eu) (FR)

#### Chiesi Press contacts:

##### **Philippe TIEGHEM**

Public Affairs, Market Access and Communication Director

[\*\*p.tiegheim@chiesi.com\*\*](mailto:p.tiegheim@chiesi.com)

##### **Sofia ALAPHILIPPE**

Communication Manager

[\*\*s.alaphilippe@chiesi.com\*\*](mailto:s.alaphilippe@chiesi.com)

#### Hephaï press contacts:

Andrew Lloyd & Associates

Juliette Schmitt / Céline Gonzalez

[juliette@ala.com](mailto:juliette@ala.com) / [celine@ala.com](mailto:celine@ala.com)

UK: + 44 1273 675 100

US: + 1 617 202 4491