



Press release 11 November 2022

Meet ULISES: A chat with Thomas Niemann (PIRCHE)



Matthias Niemann, VP Technology of PIRCHE, explains in this interview how his company is contributing to the ULISES goals in the fight of cancer.

Matthias Niemann is the VP of Technology of PIRCHE, a ULISES partner that develops digital solutions in molecular medicine for better clinical outcomes.

First, could you explain the role of your team in ULISES?

We contribute to computational pipeline which is applied before the in vitro works are carried out in later project phases. The results from this help guide the experiments. This allows the project team to check if the suggested approach in ULISES is feasible.

What type of expertise does your team bring to the project's research objectives?

The PIRCHE team has a long track record in computational immunology and more specifically in epitope matching in organ transplantation. We have contributed to several peer-reviewed published articles on



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement N° 899708

indirect T cell epitopes, antibody epitopes, and computer simulations for organ allocation. We're very excited about the ULISES consortium bundling the key institutions working in our field.

What does your research specifically focus on?

ULISES aims in a unique way to target cancer cells for an immune response. Our work is focused on how these targets need to look like to allow this immune response to be as powerful as possible.

What is the most innovative aspect of your work?

In transplant immunology, we try to maximize compatibility between organ donors and patients. For many patients, this is equivalent to finding the needle in the haystack. Although our computational task in ULISES intuitively sounds quite similar to that of organ transplantation, it faces completely different challenges. It is more like searching for multiple needles at once, and ideally these needles should be closely related to those we have searched for in other patients.

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