After many years of limited therapeutic opportunities, the treatment of type 2 diabetes has become more target and pathophysiologically driven. A typical example is represented by the development of the dipeptidyl peptidase-4 (DPP-4) inhibitors, allowing for more physiological regulation of the endocrine pancreas and leading to a previously unmet risk-to-benefit balance. Vildagliptin, one of the earliest DPP-4 inhibitors, has been tested across the entire spectrum of type 2 diabetes and has been in clinical use for 20 years. This publication critically reviews the main steps in the clinical development of this agent.

Keywords
Type 2 diabetes, DPP-4 inhibitors, vildagliptin

Disclosure: Stefano Del Prato has received research support from AstraZeneca, MSD, Novartis and Boehringer Ingelheim, and consultancy fees from AstraZeneca, Boehringer Ingelheim, Eli Lilly, GSK, MSD, Novartis, Novo Nordisk, Sanofi, Servier and Takeda. This article is a short opinion piece and has not been submitted to external peer reviewers but was reviewed by a member of the Editorial Board before publication.

Authorship: All named authors meet the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) criteria for authorship of this manuscript, take responsibility for the integrity of the work as a whole, and have given final approval to the version to be published.

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Received: 13 June 2017
Published Online: 22 August 2017

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Support: The publication of this article was supported by Novartis Pharma AG.
as it can occur in elderly people. VERIFY (NCT01528254) is a unique trial designed to determine durability, over a pre-specified 5-year follow-up, of early use of vildagliptin in combination with metformin in individuals at diagnosis or very short duration of disease and mild elevation of glycated haemoglobin (HbA1c). The results of the study will set the reference bar for any future clinical trial exploring early intensive treatment. INTERVAL (Individualised treatment targets for elderly patients with type 2 diabetes using vildagliptin add-on or lone therapy) is the only study so far exploring the potential of DPP-4 inhibitors for target setting in elderly patients. These and all the other clinical studies are discussed in the following articles, providing the reader with all the elements for critical appreciation of vildagliptin as a valuable therapeutic option across the whole spectrum of the disease, i.e., from those with newly diagnosed diabetes to those progressively aging, as well as those living longer with their disease than they ever lived without diabetes.