



**RESEARCH2REALITY**

Shining a light on research & innovation.

## How To Tackle Those 'Unanswered Questions'

An interview with Stefan Larsen

Biotechnology Entrepreneur and Venture Partner, Versant Ventures

We always like to say that the academic discovery, or the scientific discovery in the lab, is really just the very tip of the iceberg. That just buys you a right to start down a very, very long road of, hopefully one day, getting a drug that makes it to patients.

For us as venture capital investors, we need, you know, a huge amount of raw material as we call it. We need a huge amount of discoveries. We need scientists out there taking the risks, exploring areas of biology, generating new chemical matter, and that's really what feeds our engine of ultimately creating companies that will someday bring a drug to market.

### Why does basic research need funding?

It's our job as a country and it's the job of our governments to create a fertile landscape for businesses to thrive. And I see, sort of, government funded academic research as being part of that fertile landscape. For us in the world of biotech, we wouldn't exist without basic research. Because ultimately what we do in biotech is, we develop drugs in very complex areas of human biology. There are so many fundamental unanswered questions in human disease, that without basic research, we can't even begin to think about developing drugs for these diseases. So it's absolutely fundamental to our entire industry. We can't make money and we can't make a return unless we help the academics get that discovery out into the world.