ME/CFS Biobank Austria Cohort

An excellent sample collection at MedUni Wien Biobank (Medical University of Vienna)

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The **ME/CFS Biobank Austria** has been established as the first national biobank dedicated to collecting biological samples from individuals with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) in Austria. Recognizing the profound functional limitations associated with the disease, the biobank has been specifically designed to facilitate participation of patients across the full spectrum of disease severity, including those who are severely affected and home or even bedbound.

A central objective of this longitudinal cohort is to collect, process, and store biological samples according to harmonized standard operating procedures that ensure international comparability. The Austrian ME/CFS Biobank is therefore aligned with established ME/CFS biobanks in several European countries, including the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, and Iceland. Such harmonization is essential, as differences in sample collection, processing, and storage can significantly affect data quality, reproducibility, and the comparability of research findings across studies.

By integrating into this European biobanking network, the ME/CFS Biobank Austria will facilitate multicentre collaborative research, increase the robustness of scientific findings through larger harmonized cohorts, and accelerate progress in understanding the pathophysiology of ME/CFS. The collected biospecimens and associated clinical data will support research aimed at elucidating disease mechanisms, identifying diagnostic and prognostic biomarkers, defining clinically meaningful disease subgroups, and enabling the development of targeted therapeutic strategies.

As scientific knowledge and technologies continue to evolve, future research projects may include the extraction and analysis of genetic and other molecular material (e.g., DNA, RNA, epigenetic markers, transcriptomic or other omics analyses) from the collected biospecimens, subject to appropriate ethical approval and in accordance with applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

Profile of the Cohort:

Disease Area / Research Area	Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS)
Sample Types	• Serum • Plasma • Saliva • Feces • Urine • RNA • DNA • Other Stored at -60°C to -80°C
Cohort Size	Aimed: 500
Donors	Current 107 donors
Associated Data	Biometry, Anamnesis, Validated questionnaire data
Informed Consent	Broad consent
Access	See access principles of MedUni Wien Biobank
Quality Standards	ISO 21899
Contact	**Principle investigator:** Eva Untersmayr-Elsenhuber E-mail: eva.untersmayr-elsenhuber@meduniwien.ac.at **Sample coordinator:** Helmuth Haslacher E-mail: helmuth.haslacher@meduniwien.ac.at

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Research projects: Horizon Europe Project DISCOVER-ME

More about the ME/CFS Biobank Austria (in German) >>

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Austrian Cohort Initiative
Cohort Profile

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Research area	Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS)
Cohort type	Human, population-based
Cohort size	500 planned maximum Started: 2023, ongoing
Sample type	Serum, plasma, saliva, feces, urine, RNA, DNA
Data	Biometry, anamnesis, validated questionnaire data
Contact	Prof. Eva Untersmayr (PI) Prof. Helmuth Haslacher (sample coordinator)

Details: https://bit.ly/4xPkz5j

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The **ME/CFS Biobank Austria** is the first national biobank dedicated to collecting biological samples and data from people with **Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS)**, including severely affected patients who are home- or bedbound.

The longitudinal cohort follows harmonized procedures aligned with ME/CFS biobanks across Europe, enabling comparable samples and data for multicentre research into **disease mechanisms, biomarkers, patient subgroups and targeted therapies**.

Photo credit Lea Aring and German Association for ME-CFS