



WHAT WE DO

Our research and activities



FUNDING RESEARCH

ME Research UK exists to fund biomedical research projects – as simple as that. To date, we’ve invested over £1.4 million on 42 distinct studies involving many of the systems of the body.

We commission research into ME/CFS (or more simply ME) which affects people of all ages and social and ethnic groups. Its symptoms are a reality of life for up to 240,000 people in the UK alone, not to mention their family and friends. Yet the illness is not properly recognised or

researched – and this makes our role as the main independent funder of biomedical research in the UK and Europe particularly important.

ME/CFS “...is a relatively common illness. The physical symptoms can be as disabling as... rheumatoid arthritis, congestive heart failure and other chronic condition, placing a substantial burden on people with the condition, their families and carers, and hence on society.” **NICE Guideline 2007**

Our scientific research projects have taken place at universities and institutions in the UK, Belgium, Sweden and Canada. **Projects that are currently ongoing** include investigations into severely affected housebound patients who are often overlooked by science (Newcastle University); immunity in ME/CFS and cancer (University Hospital, Leeds); the usefulness of different diagnoses of ME, CFS and ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and MS (Vrije University, Belgium);

problems with eyes and vision (University of Leicester); and the origin of the oxidative stress found in the blood of ME/CFS patients (University of Dundee).

We believe that only biomedical research can find the causes of the illness, improve diagnosis and treatment, and, ultimately, arrive at a cure. That's why we focus on it. But research is expensive and becoming more so every day. That's the challenge we face, and that's why we need your support.





A HELPING HAND

Compared with other chronic illnesses, research into ME/CFS is scarce and funding difficult to obtain.

So, to 'energise ME Research', researchers with fresh, novel ideas have to be recruited and encouraged to stay in the field. This is the most difficult task of all, not least since government funding via the established research agencies is difficult to access.

It is at this leading edge that ME Research UK sees its role:

- to suggest projects,
- to give help to biomedical scientists for novel research projects that would otherwise not be funded,
- to support research groups at an early stage so they can ultimately apply for funding to larger agencies, such as the UK's Medical Research Council (MRC).

After many years of lobbying, the **MRC awarded £1.65 million** for five biomedical research studies into ME/CFS.

ME Research UK's role in this important development was acknowledged by leading researcher and successful applicant, Prof. Julia Newton:

"I'd particularly like to thank the charity, ME Research UK. The charity provided the pilot/seed-corn funding for four distinct projects, which allowed us to accumulate the data on which these successful applications to the MRC were based.

"In addition, ME Research UK has supported our research programme in a variety of ways, not least by providing formal support letters for our larger grant applications.

"The success of these applications shows what can be achieved by biomedical researchers working closely with the medical research charities in a supportive and collaborative way."

Vision, Application, Success – ME Research UK is making a difference but with your help we can do more.





RAISING AWARENESS

Because ME/CFS is an 'orphan illness' in terms of clinical recognition, public perception and scientific research, we need to do more than just fund studies. That is why we produce **Breakthrough, our free bi-annual magazine**. This unique publication is dedicated to the science of ME/CFS, and each issue reports on our funded projects, gives details of other

major developments in the investigation of the illness, and provides insightful, informed comment on the science.

It is highly regarded by scientists and patients alike. Each issue has a print-run of 4,000, and copies are provided to ME/CFS clinics, healthcare professionals, support groups and, of course, patients and their families.

To mark reaching our milestone of '£1 million of biomedical research', we produced a **32-page booklet** giving an overview of the work we have funded. Written with the lay reader in mind, it describes our projects and their outcomes, classified into subject areas (circulation, muscle, diagnosis etc.) showing the range of our investment in research.

Our website provides a wealth of information about ME/CFS, our work and how

you can help. It hosts previous editions of Breakthrough and has **details of all projects** we are funding or have funded in the past, together with links to key **official documents about ME/CFS** and a database of **abstracts of scientific papers** from 1956 onwards.

Our Facebook page delivers the most up-to-date research news mixed with articles concerning the wider ME community and postings about our supporters' activities.





MAKING IT A REALITY

It's no easy task finding the resources to fund studies, and a lot of our effort goes into doing just that. We've tried (almost) everything over the past 15 years – from ladies lunches to spring raffles and even a world record! In fact, we've built up quite an extensive mix of funding sources over the years. One of the most successful has been applications to other grant-making trusts, and we've applied to more than 500 of these in the past, many several times over.

But our main revenue stream – the basis of all the scientific projects we've funded – has been donations from people like you. Most often this

involves events undertaken by the friends and family of ME patients. To help, we've produced a **Fundraising Guide**. Please do read it, and if there's a fundraising idea that tickles your fancy, give it a try!

There are also simpler ways to help us, such as **shopping online** at Amazon and all major high street stores. From one-off gifts and standing orders to payroll giving and legacies, there's a way for everyone who cares about research to **help make it happen**.

We believe that biomedical research in ME/CFS matters... but it will only happen with your support. Please help if you can.