



Invest in ME Research

Press Release December 2019

UK Charity Invest in ME Research Pledges £500,000 for Research into ME in Norwich Research Park

For Immediate Release

UK Charity Invest in ME Research is pledging £500,000 for continued research into the disease myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME or ME/CFS) in Norwich Research Park, UK.

This major investment builds on the foundations already made for a UK/European Centre of Excellence for ME research hub in Norwich Research Park.

The pledge covers joint funding of a PhD position in partnership with University of East Anglia and over 70% of the required funding for a clinical trial of Faecal Microbiota Transplantation (FMT) being performed alongside other high-quality biomedical research at the Quadram Institute (QI).

QI's world-class facility has seen four PhDs already employed on research into ME, focusing specifically on the gut microbiota and links to ME.

Invest in ME Research Chairman Kathleen McCall said: "This is a massive undertaking for a small charity but it underlines our confidence in the quality and direction of research at Quadram Institute. This research offers an opportunity to test a new form of treatment for ME in well-designed clinical trial. On top of the other initiatives being created in partnership with QI we believe this has the potential to change the face of research into this disease."

Professor Simon Carding, Head of Gut Microbes and Health Research Programme at Quadram Institute Bioscience said: "We are incredibly grateful for the ongoing support from Invest in ME Research and their supporters. We are very excited at the prospect of undertaking the FMT clinical trial, as part of our ongoing investigations into the links between ME and the gut microbiome."

This research news comes after recent meetings of the European ME Research Group (EMERG) and European ME Clinicians Council (EMECC) in which QI and UEA played major roles and which will form European collaborations and coordination of research into ME and clinical expertise development for this disease.

The continuing and developing research in Norwich Research Park holds out great hope for the future for ME patients and their families.

ME commonly presents with hugely diverse and debilitating symptoms including post-exertional malaise, unrefreshing sleep, cognitive dysfunction and widespread pain. ME has been estimated to affect around 250,000 people in the UK and direct and indirect economic costs have been estimated in the USA to be \$20 billion annually. The severity of symptoms varies. Around 25% of sufferers may be classed as severely affected - often bed bound at some point in their lives with periods of relapse and remission common and only 6% returning to full health.

The pledge brings to five the number of PhD positions that the charity has funded/part-funded.

ENDS

Notes for editors

About Invest in ME Research

Invest in ME Research (charity nr 1153730) is an independent UK charity finding, funding and facilitating biomedical research into ME.

Invest in ME Research is run by volunteers - patients or parents of children with ME - with no paid staff. Overheads are kept to a minimum to enable all funds raised to go to promoting education of, and facilitating and funding biomedical research into ME. The charity organises an annual International ME Conference Week in London which includes a two day research Colloquium, young/early career researcher conference and a public international conference that regularly has delegates from twenty countries attending.

The charity's efforts are on developing the Centre of Excellence for ME to maintain a strategy of high-quality biomedical research into the disease and encouraging European collaboration in research and development of clinical expertise.

For more information visit <http://www.investinme.org/pr01-Dec19>

Contact details [Chairman Kathleen McCall, Invest in ME Research, PO BOX 561, Eastleigh SO50 0GQ, UK email: info@investinme.org]

About the Quadram Institute

The Quadram Institute (quadram.ac.uk) is an interdisciplinary research centre at the forefront of a new era of food and health research. It brings together researchers and clinicians under one roof and houses one of Europe's largest endoscopy units and a clinical research facility.

Based on the Norwich Research Park, The Quadram Institute is a partnership between Quadram Institute Bioscience, the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the University of East Anglia and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC).

Its mission is to deliver healthier lives through innovation in gut health, microbiology and food and its vision is to understand how food and microbes interact to promote health and prevent disease.

Four interconnected research themes in Quadram Institute Bioscience deliver a pipeline of research in plants, microbes, food and health: microbes in the food chain; the gut and the microbiome; food innovation and population health.

For media enquiries please contact:

Andrew Chapple, andrew.chapple@quadram.ac.uk, 01603 251490, 07713087883

About University of East Anglia

The University of East Anglia (UEA) is a UK Top 25 university and is ranked in the top 50 globally for research citations. Known for its world-leading research and good student experience, it was awarded Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework and is a leading member of Norwich Research Park, one of Europe's biggest concentrations of researchers in the fields of environment, health and plant science. www.uea.ac.uk

For media enquiries please contact:

Penny Powell, P.Powell@uea.ac.uk: 01603 591238