

[Myalgic encephalomyelitis also known as chronic fatigue syndrome – UKRI](#)

The aim of this programme is to support high quality and collaborative research into myalgic encephalomyelitis, also known as chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), a complex and serious debilitating medical condition with a diverse range of symptoms.

Duration:

Ongoing

Partners involved:

Medical Research Council (MRC)

[Show related funding opportunities](#)

The scope and what we're doing

Supporting and enabling a strong portfolio of myalgic encephalomyelitis or chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) research has been a high priority for the Medical Research Council (MRC) for several years.

ME/CFS is a complex and serious debilitating medical condition with a diverse range of symptoms. The most well known of these is profound physical and/or mental fatigue, while others include pain, disturbed sleep patterns and gastrointestinal problems. Each patient experiences their own personal combination of symptoms.

Why we're doing it

There is an unmet clinical need for better diagnosis and treatments for people living with myalgic encephalomyelitis or chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS).

Opportunities, support and resources available

Funding opportunities

- [Researching ME/CFS: highlight notice](#)

Closing date: Open - no closing date

MRC has supported this area of research through a cross-board highlight notice since 2003.

High quality applications are invited to any of MRC's research boards or fellowship schemes, as appropriate, based on the scientific or clinical area.

[Find out how MRC decides which research proposals to fund.](#)

Strategic initiatives

In addition to response-mode funding, MRC continues to support ME/CFS research through the DecodeME strategic initiative.

DecodeME

In 2020, MRC and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) jointly funded the £3.2 million [DecodeME](#) study (£1.4 million from NIHR and 1.8 million from MRC).

The study is analysing samples from 20,000 people with ME/CFS to search for genetic differences that may indicate underlying causes or increase the risk of developing the condition. The research will be the world's largest genome-wide association study of ME/CFS and hopes to aid the development of diagnostic tests and targeted treatments.

The study is led by a collaboration of researchers, people with ME/CFS, carers and advocates. It grew out of the UK ME/CFS Research Collaborative, which Professor Sir Stephen Holgate (University of Southampton) established in 2013.

In 2019, MRC and NIHR supported a workshop to bring together scientists, charities and people living with ME/CFS, to provide recommendations and inform the development of the research proposal.

DecodeME was awarded following submission and peer review of this research proposal.

ME/CFS Priority Setting Partnership

In 2022, MRC co-funded an [ME/CFS Priority Setting Partnership](#) to identify the Top 10+ ME/CFS research priorities. The partnership was led by people with ME/CFS, their carers and clinicians, and facilitated by non-profit making initiative, the James Lind Alliance.

We would particularly welcome proposals that address one or more of the research areas identified by the ME/CFS Priority Setting Partnership under the [MRC 'Researching ME/CFS: Highlight Notice](#)

UKCRC ME Research Subgroup

MRC are a part of the UK Clinical Research Collaboration ME Research Subgroup. This group brings together partners and wider expert stakeholders to raise awareness of ME/CFS research, build trust, support researchers to develop high quality research proposals and increase capacity in the research workforce in this area.

Past projects, outcomes and impact

Past projects and activities

[Understanding the mechanisms of ME/CFS – a call for proposals \(2011\) on the UK Government Web Archive](#)

[MRC ME/CFS expert group \(2008 to 2010\) on the UK Government Web Archive](#)

[MRC ME/CFS research workshop and prioritisation meeting \(2009\) on the UK Government Web National Archive](#)

[Research strategy \(2003\) on the UK Government Web National Archive](#)

[ME/CFS research projects from 2004 to 2017 \(XLSX and CSV\)](#)

Who to contact

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