



# *Invest in ME Research*

Press Release December 2022

## **UK Charity Invest in ME Research Announces First Fellowship for Research into Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) in Norwich Research Park**

**For Immediate Release – 20<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

UK Charity Invest in ME Research announces that the charity has committed to funding the first Invest in ME Research Postdoctoral Fellowship for research into myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME, also referred to as ME/CFS).

In partnership with Quadram Institute Bioscience this new position has been created to continue and extend research into ME and builds on the foundations already made for a UK/European Centre of Excellence for ME research hub in Norwich Research Park.

The charity will now fund Dr Katharine Seton to continue her ME research career at Quadram Institute.

Recently, Dr Seton completed her PhD that was funded by Invest in ME Research and the University of East Anglia [[1](#)].

This is an important step in supporting the continuity of the ME research strategy that has been well established and is being performed and planned at Quadram Institute and University of East Anglia.

Research into ME requires urgency and investment and it is necessary to maintain the base of research that has been developed over the years in Norwich Research Park.

The charity has now funded five PhDs and is currently fully funding an FMT clinical trial at Quadram Institute (the only clinical trial for ME currently in the UK, and one of just a few in Europe).

The new fellowship further enhances the opportunities at the centre, making it the pre-eminent location for funding research into this devastating disease. The value of this UK/European centre of excellence for ME is clear and it is notable that this has been developed in partnership by patients and carers and a forward-looking research institute and university, with world-class researchers.

The charity looks to continue funding the centre and facilitate the European/international collaboration within the European ME Research Group (EMERG).

Details of some of Dr Seton's planned research will include determining if the intestinal microbiome contributes to oxidative stress in ME patients and what the impact of microbiota replacement therapy (MRT) is on intestinal and systemic oxidative stress in ME patients.

This latest award follows on from the Invest in ME Research funding, as well as recent funding from the BBSRC for facilities to be used in the clinical trial. Additional external funding has also been received for research that has been added on to the clinical trial, and that will complement the current and ongoing research [2].

Dr Seton recently reported on her ME research PhD completion [3].

Invest in ME Research Chairman Kathleen McCall said:

"This is a welcome development for our charity and for the field of ME research. This will provide the continuity that is required to support the centre of excellence hub approach in performing a strategy of biomedical research into ME. It also retains valuable research experience in the ME field and opens up new possibilities, alongside the clinical trial being funded by the charity. The charity will have committed in excess of £2 million on research and supporting activities over the last years. Our support for research by Quadram Institute in Norwich Research Park does not end here either, and we hope to announce new research in the near future".

Professor Simon Carding, Head of Gut Microbes and Health Research Programme at Quadram Institute Bioscience said:

"This is an important step in building continuity to the ME research we are doing and will provide valuable scientific support for the upcoming RESTORE-ME clinical trial"

Norwich Research Park is one of the largest research parks in Europe and continues to provide the ideal environment for further investment in research into ME.

\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\*

### **Notes for editors**

Myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME, also referred to as ME/CFS) is a debilitating, chronic condition that has serious, long-term effects on health.

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.

### **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.

The charity is run and supported 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 funding biomedical research into the disease and improving education and knowledge about ME.

Since 2006 the charity has organised an annual International ME Conference Weeks in London that have included two-day research Colloquiums, Young/Early Career Researcher conferences, and international cpd-accredited conferences that regularly attract delegates from twenty countries.

The charity's efforts are directed to facilitating the development of a UK/European Centre of Excellence for ME hub to perform and 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 <https://www.investinme.org>

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

### **About the Quadram Institute**

The Quadram Institute ([quadram.ac.uk](http://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 in 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.

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## **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](http://www.uea.ac.uk)

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## **References**

- 1 Defining Autoimmune Aspects of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME/CFS)  
<https://www.investinme.org/ce-gm-phd2.shtml>
- 2 Investment in ME Research  
<https://www.investinme.org/ce-research-june22.shtml>
- 3 "Investigating Immune Reactivity to the Intestinal Microbiome in Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome"  
<https://www.investinme.org/ce-blog-2210-01.shtml>

## **Further Information**

<https://quadram.ac.uk/do-the-answers-to-mecfs-lie-within-our-gut/>

<https://quadram.ac.uk/invest-in-me-research-pledges-625000-for-research-into-me-in-norwich-research-park/>

<https://quadram.ac.uk/blogs/the-highs-and-lows-of-a-phd-in-me-research/>

<https://quadram.ac.uk/meet-the-researchers-behind-a-new-trial-into-me/>

<https://quadram.ac.uk/major-investment-for-poo-transplant-facility-in-norwich/>