

Healthy Volunteers Wanted

Currently there are two simultaneous studies on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME)/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) being conducted in co-ordination with Dr. Lewis and CFS Discovery. Both of these studies have successfully recruited people with ME-CFS and now require people without ME-CFS to form a comparison from which conclusions about the syndrome can be made.

These studies are being conducted by researchers at the University of Melbourne and the Australian National University. For these studies to be successful in terms of helping people with ME-CFS, healthy control volunteers are essential. Please strongly consider supporting people with ME-CFS by participating in this research study by two world-ranked universities.

We are looking for volunteers that are all of the following:

- Female
- Any age, especially looking for people between 30 and 40 years old
- Not suffering from any ailments
- Not taking any medication
- Not living with or directly genetically related (mother, brother, daughter, etc.) to anyone with ME-CFS.

Volunteers will be required to make 2 visits to the CFS Discovery clinic (Suite 8, 90 Mitcham Rd, Donvale, VIC 3111). The first visit will take approximately 2 hours, in which time each volunteer will complete a standing test and give a blood sample. Before leaving they will be given a box to collect a fecal sample and some bottles to complete a 24-hour urine collection while at home. The second visit will be the day after the urine collection and fecal collections have been completed, the volunteer will bring the collections back to the clinic and have a 2nd blood sample taken, thus concluding the volunteers participation in the study.

Volunteers will not be charged for any of the diagnostic tests that will be conducted. The benefit for volunteers is therefore a free total health assessment, which includes tests that are not covered by Medicare or other health insurance (funds are provided by a research grant). These results can be provided to your GP via the CFS Discovery Clinic.

The free tests to be conducted for a total health assessment include:

Full Blood Examination/ESR/CRP (excluding cholesterol), Liver Function tests, Hormone tests (Thyroid Stimulating Hormone, Parathyroid, Activin A/Follistatin and DHEA tests), Immune system tests (Nuclear Antibodies and Immunoglobulin E tests), Gut health tests (Glucose tolerance and Microbial Fecal Analysis tests), and a Vitamin D (25D) test.

The first study, led by The University of Melbourne, aims to elucidate the biological mechanisms by which ME-CFS affects the body. This study will use new analytical techniques that have previously been used to study the mechanisms and biomarkers of cancer and diabetes. These techniques are a part of a new emerging field of science research known as Metabolomics. This approach enables the identification of the small compounds found within the body that are a part of all the mechanisms required for life, including the production of energy, the regeneration of cells, the building of muscle and other tissues, and the maintenance of immunity. As such, these compounds are very sensitive to change and by measuring them within people suffering with ME-CFS it is possible to identify what is happening to these mechanisms within the body and hopefully elucidate what perpetuates the syndrome.

These compounds will be measured within the blood, urine and feces. Along with this study the microbial composition of the feces will also be measured as a means of examining the impact of microbes in the gut on ME-CFS. For this study we require a blood, urine and fecal sample from each volunteer.

The second study, led by The Australian National University (ANU), will focus on the bioinformatics analyses of routine and special pathology data. The aim is (1) to utilise detected pathology data patterns to guide scientific investigations into ME-CFS disease mechanism, and (2) to enhance the role of pathology and associated data in the laboratory diagnosis of ME-CFS. These analyses will also include two novel markers of immune system function.

For consenting participants only, this project will also perform a limited ME-CFS genetics study. This study will look for genetic evidence of Scandinavian ethnicity (proposed as a factor in ME-CFS onset) and a comparison of activated ("expressed") genes between ME-CFS and control groups.

The researchers for the project are as follows:

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A/Professor Brett Lidbury (BSc (Hons), PhD)	(02) 6125-9429
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Dr. Neil McGregor (MDS, PhD)	(03) 9509-6939
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