Series (Part 3): Initiative of German Research Practice Networks DEGAM-ForNet

"Outpatient research and networked thinking"

As a community of 40 general medical university locations, we are developing infrastructure for research in the GP setting throughout Germany in the DEGAM-ForNet initiative. The aim of our cross-site collaboration is to lay the foundations for supra-regional, cross-sectoral research and to advance practice-relevant projects "from practice, for practice" for evidence relevant to healthcare. Data and IT infrastructure, participation and qualification are central fields of action. By promoting dialogue between science, practice, politics and the public, we create the link between theory and practice, outpatient and inpatient care as well as general practitioner and specialist care.



>> Scientific expertise in clinical research and health services research combined with precise knowledge of the reality of outpatient care in GP practices: On this basis, we create infrastructure with GP research practice networks. The university institutes for general practice form the interface for research and teaching in outpatient care. To further strengthen this, we work together as university institutes of general practice in the DEGAM-For-Net initiative - nationwide and networked.

Why research in primary care?

As a nationwide primary care service for the population, GP primary care is the foundation of a functioning healthcare system. GPs are the first point of contact for physical and mental complaints, for acute and chronic illnesses. The majority of consultations are concluded in the GP practice, and patient satisfaction with GP care is consistently high. In 2023, the DEGAM position paper "Ambulant forschen - vernetzt denken: Forschung in der Primärversorgung" (Outpatient research - networked thinking: research in primary care) set out GP practices and their teams are indispensable as part of networked university medical research, including in Germany.

Why research infrastructure in primary care?

"Our laboratory is the practice" - this DEGAM position paper from 2014 initiated the Germany-wide infrastructure development of GP research practice networks. Project-related cooperation with GP practices and short-term data collection are insufficient to scientifically address practice-related and cross-sectoral issues in large collaborative projects in an internationally compatible manner. Functioning data flows, common processes and standards are needed for interdisciplinary guidelines, long-term studies and complex intervention studies under everyday conditions.

Internationally, research in primary care via research practice networks (FPN) is already well advanced. By utilising health data and information technology, FPNs make a sub-stance contribution to generating knowledge and improving care. The integration of FPNs into existing healthcare systems and research structures is of crucial importance.





The German Research Practice Networks Initiative - from DESAM-ForNet to DEGAM-ForNet

With the BMBF funding for research practice networks from 2020 to 2025, progress was also made in Germany: in the DESAM-ForNet initiative, 23 university locations initially joined forces in six funded research practice networks. Decisive common foundations were created.

Since 2025, our structure has now been organised nationwide as the DEGAM-ForNet initiative, in which 40 university sites work together on an equal footing - across all sites, in close collaboration with the Network of University Medicine (NUM) and many other research structures. The coordination centre and some FPNs are funded by the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR) and work towards the overarching common goal of a Germany-wide research infrastructure in the GP setting.

Networked, well-founded, on a sustainable basis. Our goal is to improve the care of the population with practical and cross-sectoral research.

<< by: Prof Dr Jutta Bleidorn1and Dr Leonor[Heinz2]

1: Spokesperson of the DEGAM-ForNet initiative (Jena) 2: Head of the coordination centre (Berlin)





Prof. Jutta Bleidorn, MD, spokesperson (Jena) "Cooperation instead of competition, infrastructure for research in primarycare and for cross-sectoral research - this is howwe create the basis for putting future healthcare on a sound footing with healthcare-related research projects."



Prof. Dr Stefanie Joos, Associate Member (Tübingen) "DEGAM-ForNet contributes expertise and structures that can be used sustainablyto map primarycare processes and conduct high-qualityresearch. This potential can also be a valuable addition to the NUM, for example, byintegrating the GP care level as an element of cross-sectoral research."



Christian Kretzschmann, assessor (Würzburg) "Common standards, particularly in the area of IT, as well as the involvement of practice teams and citizens in all phases of the research process are important building blocks for the expansion of cross-site research projects relevant to healthcare."



Prof Annika Viniol, Deputy Spokesperson / Spokesperson of the DEGAM Research Section (Marburg)



Dr Leonor Heinz, Coordination Office (Berlin) "The Coordination Office brings together general practice researchers and supports the cross-site development and provision of customised tools for research in general practice. Other functions include communication and ensuring sustainability"



Elena Hohmann, M.Sc.Psych., Associate Member (Münster)



Prof Dr med Ildikó Gágyor, Spokesperson of the DEGAM Research Section (Würzburg)



Prof Dr Achim Mortsiefer, Deputy Spokesperson (Witten)

MVF series "Institutes of health services research - made by ..."

With this issue and instalment, "Monitor Versorgungsforschung" continues its new series "Institutes of Health Services Research". Here, institutes, organisations and research associations that are involved in health services research on both sides of the university landscape are presented in loose succession.

You can find the previous episodes of the series here: https://www.monitorversorgungsforschung.de/cooperations/serieinstitute-der-vf/

If you think that MVF should also present your institute or organisation for good reason, please email stegmaier@m-vf.de.

MVF series "Health services research made in ..."

Starting with the first episode in 2016, when "Monitor Versorgungsforschung" visited Greifswald to present the Institute for Community Medicine, this series has so far focussed on 40 very different locations. What they all have in common is that they harmonise research and teaching and put a lot of passion and impetus into what health services research is really all about: the honest endeavour to improve people's lives and health care a little.

All previous episodes of the series can be found here: https://www.monitor-versorgungsforschung.de/cooperations/vf-serie/

If you think that MVF should also feature your department, institute or centre for good reason, please email stegmaier@m-vf.de.