

# Mapping Clinical Trials Funders

## An Exploratory Investigation in Germany

Clinical trials are essential to inform medical decision-making. However, previous work has shown a lack of transparency in trial registration and reporting, leading to evidence distortion and research waste. Funders can drive trial transparency through policies and practices to monitor and support funded projects. Good governance of trial grants, as well as independent evaluation by researchers, requires an overview of trials at the level of funders. Yet, neither clinical trial registries nor funders consistently capture or report this information. This study aims to develop scalable semi-automated methods to identify clinical trial funders and the trials they fund.

**Samruddhi S. Yerunkar, Maia Salholz-Hillel, Friederike E. Kohrs, Delwen L. Franzen**  
 QUEST Center for Responsible Research, Berlin Institute of Health @ Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin

### Phase I: Identify funders of trials (Clinical Trial → Funder)

We explore ways to identify funder and grant ids for 2000 German trials using trial registration numbers, matched result publications, and data made available by funders.

#### Clinical Trial Registration

**Source:** Clinical trial registries  
**Method:** Query APIs and web scrape  
**Challenges:**  
 ❌ Funder and grant ids often missing  
 ❌ Inconsistent names (no controlled vocabulary)

#### Clinical Trial Publication

**Source 1:** Publication PDFs  
**Method:** Text mine for funding statements and grant IDs  
**Challenges:**  
 ❌ Regular expressions miss funders/grants (false negative)  
 ❌ Non-grant id's or other projects detected (false positive)

#### Funder-Provided Data

We cross-reference trial registration numbers with data made available by certain funders:

**Source:**  
 1. On their official website  
 2. Under the Freedom of Information Act  
 3. Upon request by other researchers

**Method:** Manual and automatic search  
**Challenges:**  
 ❌ Trial registration number and/or publications not known or shared by funder

**Collaborators and Investigators**  
 This is where you will find people and organizations involved with this study.

**Sponsor**

Miltenyi Biotec B.V. & Co. KG

**Collaborators**

- German Federal Ministry of Education and Research

**Investigators**

- Principal Investigator: Gustav Steinhoff, M.D., University of Rostock

Research Paper  
 Cardiac Function Improvement and Bone Marrow Response – Outcome Analysis of the Randomized PERFECT Phase III Clinical Trial of Intramyocardial CD133+ Application After Myocardial Infarction

**Funding**  
 German Ministry of Research and Education (BMBF): FKZ0312138A, EU ESF/IV-WM-B34-0011/08, ESF/IV-WM-B34-0030/10 and Miltenyi Biotec GmbH, Bergisch-Gladbach, Germany.

**Source 2:** Bibliometric databases

**Method:** Query APIs  
**Challenges:**  
 ❌ Limited coverage for clinical trial funders  
 ❌ Better coverage in proprietary databases

Klinische Studien / Systematische Reviews

Liste der abgeschlossenen Vorhaben

Ausführende Stelle	Thema	FKZ	Gesamtförderbetrag	Laufzeit
Heinrich Heine-Universität Düsseldorf	Erste internationale randomisierte Studie zum Vergleich der Effizienz von Etoposid, Docetaxel und Cisplatin-Mitoxantrone (EDP/M) versus Streptozotocin-Mitoxantrone (Su/M) bei Patienten mit fortgeschrittenem Neuroendokrinen Karzinom	01KG0501	3.737.574 EURO	01.09.2005 - 31.08.2012
Universität Würzburg	Studie zur Wirksamkeit der tiefen Hirnstimulation auf die Lebensqualität bei Parkinsonpatienten im Vergleich zu einer optimalen medikationellen Therapie (EARLYSTIM)	01KG0502	3.176.823 EURO	01.10.2005 - 31.07.2012

#### Sources of Monetary or Material Support

Public funding institutions financed by tax money/Government funding body (German Research Foundation (DFG), Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), etc.)

Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung Dienststz Berlin  
 Hannoversche Straße 28-30  
 10115 Berlin  
 Germany

Deutsches Register Klinischer Studien  
 German Clinical Trials Register

B.4 Source(s) of Monetary or Material Support for the clinical trial: EU Clinical Trials Register

B.4.1 Name of organisation providing support Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF)

B.4.2 Country Germany

Crossref  
 Cardiac Function Improvement and Bone Marrow Response  
 JOURNAL ARTICLE published August 2017 in EBioMedicine  
 Research funded by German Ministry of Research and Education (FKZ0312138A, EU ESF/IV-WM-B34-0011/08, ESF/IV-WM-B34-0030/10)

OpenAlex  
 Cardiac Function Improvement and Bone Marrow Response  
 Funder Miltenyi Biotec

Dimensions  
 Cardiac Function Improvement and Bone Marrow Response  
 EBioMedicine, 22, 208-224 - July 2017  
 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ebiom.2017.07.022

Supporting grants - 1  
 Collaborative Project: Pilot Study for the Removal of Translational Inhibitors in Regenerative Medicine, Subproject 1  
 Federal Ministry of Education and Research  
 EUR 2,518,179 2007 - 2014  
 Grant number: 0312138A - Original description

Funded by  
 European Commission  
 Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Clean → Coalesce → Deduplicate → Manual Check

#### Funder Taxonomy

We use data from Phase I and additional bibliometric sources to build an enriched funder taxonomy:

- Funder names: variants, translations, common misspellings, abbreviations
- Funder IDs



trial_id	funder	award
NCT00950274	German Federal Ministry of Education and Research	FKZ0312138A
NCT00950274	Miltenyi Biotec GmbH	
DRKS00004239	German Federal Ministry of Education and Research	01ET1001A
EUCTR2007-005503-17	German Federal Ministry of Education and Research	

### Phase II: Identify Trials of Funders (Funder → Clinical Trial)

We will use the enriched funder taxonomy and methods from Phase I to develop a scalable semi-automatic workflow to identify clinical trials and result publications associated with funders.

## What YOU can do

#### Clinical Trialist

- Include grant IDs and funder in registrations and publications



#### Meta-Researchers

- Adapt our scalable methods to other funder cohorts!



#### Journals/Publishers

- Require grant IDs and funder for published articles
- Share funding metadata with bibliometric databases



#### Clinical Trial Registries

- Implement controlled vocabulary and IDs for funders
- Require grant IDs



#### Funder

- Link project to trial registration and publications using IDs
- Require, support, and enforce researchers to link to funding details



#### Bibliometric Databases

- Incorporate, standardize, and link funding data to other research objects
- Extract grant IDs and funder from publications



Images from Noun Project

Learn more about this project at **Poster 058** or at our **website**



VolkswagenStiftung  
 Award number: 9C430

RR JOIN US IN BERLIN!  
 RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH IN ACTION  
 QUEST Unconference 2025  
 September 22-24  
<https://rrr-in-action2025.org>

[www.bihealth.org](http://www.bihealth.org)