



**DZHK**  
Deutsches Zentrum für  
Herz-Kreislauf-Forschung

Information for study patients

# Joining forces against heart disease





### Patient story

## Gabriele M. (79) often suffers from shortness of breath.

When she climbs stairs, she also has chest pain. Her doctor discovered that she had a narrowed aortic valve. As a result, her heart is not pumping enough blood to her body and is under too much strain. Ms. M. needs a new heart valve to prevent damage to her heart.

Thanks to new treatment methods, she no longer needs surgery: The valve can simply be inserted into her heart using a catheter, which is much less invasive. Ms. M. is taking part in a study at the German Center for

Cardiovascular Research. The study is investigating whether the use of different medications improves the scarring of the heart tissue and whether the heart recovers well.

The new valve has given Ms. M. a much better quality of life. "During the trial, I received very personalized support from the trial staff," says Ms. M. "If I had any questions or concerns, there was always someone there for me."

**"During the trial, the doctors took a lot of time for my treatment."**

Gabriele M. (79), study participant at the German Center for Cardiovascular Research



## A matter of the heart

### Research for your health

In recent decades, research and science have made great strides in improving the care of people with heart disease. Fewer people are dying from heart attacks. There are less invasive ways to replace heart valves and many other improvements.

Unfortunately, the number of heart patients continues to rise as people live longer and heart disease becomes more common.

The German Center for Cardiovascular Research (DZHK) focuses on researching cardiovascular diseases. Experts from all over Germany have joined forces to develop new treatments. The DZHK is funded by public money from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research as well as the federal states.

### Thanks to research, the number of deaths from heart attacks is decreasing.



Illustration by Freepik

Source: German Heart Report 2021

“At the German Center for Cardiovascular Research, we are shaping the future of cardiac medicine. Together, we conduct research to find innovative therapies that sustainably improve patients’ lives.”

Prof. Dr. Stefanie Dimmeler, Spokesperson of the Board of Directors from the German Center for Cardiovascular Research

## At a glance

# The German Center for Cardiovascular Research

**Research**  
in the laboratory and in the clinic



**Training**  
of young scientists



**29 Partner Institutions**  
at 6 DZHK partner sites



**Public Funding**  
of the studies



**20,000 Patients**  
in 35 clinical trials



**250,000 Blood Samples**  
for research



Illustrations by Freepik

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## Clinical Research


### With patients, for patients

In the laboratories of the DZHK, researchers are investigating the causes of heart disease and how it can be cured. This gives rise to many ideas for new treatment methods.

With the help of clinical trials, the researchers, and physicians at the DZHK can test whether a treatment is effective and safe. If the results of the trials are positive, they can improve patient care for many people because they are incorporated into the guidelines. All doctors are obliged to follow the guidelines.

Thousands of patients from all over Germany and Europe take part in DZHK trials. This is because a clinical trial can only provide meaningful results if the data from many patients is analyzed.

For patients, participating in a study can be beneficial. This way, they are helping other people, and they also benefit from excellent care.



**“Clinical trials give patients the opportunity to gain access to new therapies that they would not receive otherwise and that can potentially help them.”**

PD Dr. Anja Sandek (Göttingen),  
Clinical Research Physician at the German Center  
for Cardiovascular Research





### Patient story

Detlef S. (61) is quickly exhausted and tired when he does physical activity.

Sometimes, his heart rhythm gets out of sync, and his heart beats irregularly and too fast. Mr. S. suffers from heart failure and atrial fibrillation, a cardiac arrhythmia. Currently, there are hardly any treatment options that can improve Mr. S.'s condition and disease progression. Atrial fibrillation can be treated with medication, but when these fail or cause side effects, catheter ablation is used. Catheter ablation specifically eliminates the heart tissue that is interfering with the rhythm.

Doctors at the DZHK now want to conduct a study to find out whether catheter ablation of atrial fibrillation is superior to current drug treatment. In the best-case scenario, Mr. S. physical condition will improve again.

“The procedure went very smoothly, and I was able to go home the next day,” says Mr. S. „If there is anything that can help me, I don't want to leave it untried.“

“With a bit of luck, the trial could help me.“

Detlef S. (61), study participant at the German Center for Cardiovascular Research

## DZHK Heart Bank

### A treasure for research

Your doctor has asked you to donate blood and urine for research. What do we need the samples for?

Scientists at the DZHK use patient samples to search for the causes of diseases. They can use this knowledge to develop new treatments. The samples can be stored for a long time at very low temperatures and can be used for research even years later.

Because many physicians from all over Germany are involved, the DZHK is creating the country's largest resource for cardiovascular research: the DZHK Heart Bank. This is a great treasure for research. The more patients who donate their samples and data, the more valuable it will be.

Protecting patients' personal information is very important to us. All data and samples are securely encrypted and only made available to researchers according to strict guidelines.



**“The DZHK Heart Bank contains clinical data, image data and samples from thousands of patients. By scientifically analyzing the data, we can better understand the causes of disease.”**

Prof. Dr. Matthias Nauck (Greifswald), DZHK Heart Bank





## DZHK

### Information for patients - Up to date online

Would you like to find out more about the German Center for Cardiovascular Research?

All ongoing clinical studies of the DZHK are presented in an understandable way on our **PatientInformationPlatform PIP**. Here you can also find out which research results have been achieved thanks to your participation in the study.

Thank you for your interest and support!

Information for patients on all ongoing  
DZHK studies: [pip.dzhk.de](https://pip.dzhk.de)



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**Do you have any questions?  
We are here for you.**

**German Center for  
Cardiovascular Research e. V.**

[www.dzhk.de/en](http://www.dzhk.de/en)

[pip.dzhk.de](http://pip.dzhk.de)

E-mail: [studien@dzhk.de](mailto:studien@dzhk.de)

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P.O. Box 65 21 33, 13316 Berlin

Potsdamer Straße 58, 10785 Berlin (as of 1/2024)

Phone: +49 30 3465529-01, Fax: +49 30 3465529-99

Board of Directors: Stefanie Dimmeler, Steffen Massberg, Thomas Sommer