

DACHS

■ Requests for biological samples in the DACHS study

Started in 2003, the DACHS study is an ongoing, population-based, epidemiological case-control study including more than 5.000 cases with colorectal cancer and about the same number of age-, sex-, and county-matched controls without colorectal cancer. From these participants, we obtained detailed information about sociodemographic factors, and medical and lifestyle history. Furthermore, we requested copies of medical records from their caring physicians. Most subjects participated in a face-to-face interview and provided blood samples or, in the rare cases when blood samples were not available, mouthwash samples. DNA extraction was performed in all these samples, and information is available from GWAS and candidate gene analysis for most participants.

In addition, the patients with colorectal cancer (cases) agreed that a sample of their tumor tissue will be transferred to the German Cancer Research Center, Division C070. The tissue samples were requested from the pathologies of the participating clinics in the study region and, in cooperation with the Institute of Pathology at the University of Heidelberg and the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Tissue Bank in Heidelberg, processed into tissue microarrays. For a large number of patients, molecular tumor tissue information is available (mutations, immunohistochemical markers and epigenetics).

The DACHS biobank is a unique, population-based, large scale collection of blood and tissue samples. Our aim is to preserve and to analyse biological samples for at least 20 years. All results from laboratory analyses can be linked with a huge database of information about the study participants. Moreover, follow-up is being or will be conducted in colorectal cancer patients 3, 5 and 10 years after diagnosis, including information on therapy, recurrence of disease, vital status, and cause of death. The time frame for investigations within the DACHS biobank is thus far beyond many other studies but the material, on the other hand, is very limited.

Experts from other departments or disciplines who would like to start an investigation based on data and biological samples of the DACHS study are encouraged to propose pertinent projects. However, due to the long-term layout of the DACHS biobank, considerations how the required material for the analysis planned can be restricted to the minimum are an absolute necessity.

Looking forward to receiving your project proposals,

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