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**Press release**  
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**€1.6m in FWF funding for Med Uni Graz-coordinated research group**  
**Important cash injection in the fight against aggressive lymphoma**

Graz, 16 January 2024: Each year around 1,000 patients in Austria receive a diagnosis of lymphoma, an aggressive form of cancer in the lymph nodes. Despite new therapies, this malignant disease of the lymphatic system results in death in around 30 to 50% of patients. Med Uni Graz researchers have made it their mission to investigate aggressive lymphoma more closely in order to provide the best therapy possible. The scientists have now received a generous grant of EUR 1.6 m for the "LymphoCheck" project.

**Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches as the key to success**

In preliminary studies, the four scientists from Med Uni Graz and Joanneum Research were able to show that a high percentage of aggressive lymphomas evade the immune system. This means that the degenerated lymphoma cells elude the immune response that is directed at them. The scientists' aim is to understand this immune evasion, which is mediated by two tumor suppressor proteins that are the long-standing research focus of two of the four teams. The main question: How and with which therapeutic measures can lymphoma cells be identified for a targeted immune response? "In this project, we combine functional genomics, tumor immunology methods and bioinformatic analysis to establish new therapies and improve existing ones. Our goal is to achieve new insight into how immune evasion is regulated and then use it to develop new therapies as well as improve the efficacy of existing immunotherapies," says head of research Alexander Deutsch from the Division of Haematology about the content and goals of the project. Andreas Prokesch and Julia Feichtinger from the Gottfried Schatz Research Center at Med Uni Graz and Joanna Hummer from Joanneum Research HEALTH make up the rest of the quartet of scientists.

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Research funding from the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) supports teams of three to five scientists who explore complex research questions in depth from different locations or develop new questions and pursue interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approaches. On the basis of this approach, the FWF drives forward scientific cooperation within Austria and offers funded consortia the opportunity to pool their expertise on a research question across several locations.

### **Number of lymphoma diagnoses steadily increasing**

Specialists have engaged in research on this disease for decades, and they have succeeded in characterizing the individual types of lymphoma and differentiating between them. Parallel to this progress, the treatment of lymphoma has also improved, especially the insight that the different types of lymphoma each require their own special therapeutic approach. The research at Med Uni Graz and Joanneum Research has yielded more important findings in this field and led to the development of new therapeutic approaches.

#### **Further information and contact:**

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#### **Profile: Alexander Deutsch**

In 2000 Alexander Deutsch started his medical career as a research associate at University Hospital Graz. In 2004 he joined the Med Uni Graz Division of Haematology and became an active member of the lymphoma research group in this division. He has directed its molecular biology lab since 2009. He is concerned with the molecular mechanisms that contribute to the development of lymphoma. In 2014 he completed his habilitation on the subject of internal medicine/theoretical experimental hematology.