



WHITTEMORE PETERSON  
INSTITUTE FOR NEURO-IMMUNE DISEASE

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### ***What is the Whittemore Peterson Institute?***

The Whittemore Peterson Institute for Neuro Immune Disease (WPI) is a comprehensive translational clinical research program committed to providing novel diagnostic and effective treatments for patients with neuroimmune diseases such as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, fibromyalgia, gulf war illness and other similarly presenting illnesses.

### ***Where is the WPI located?***

The WPI is located on the medical school campus of the University of Nevada, Reno. It is an integral part of new Center for Molecular Medicine, a 100,000 square foot translational research medical facility. This facility will soon be joined by a new medical education building bringing medical students and nurses together who may one day work side by side with experienced physicians at the WPI.

### ***What is XMRV?***

XMRV is a new human retrovirus. HIV and HTLV are the only other families of known human exogenous retroviruses. XMRV was first identified in prostate cancer tissue of men with a specific genetic defect in their antiviral defense pathway. The Whittemore Peterson Institute was the first to isolate human XMRV virus from a diseased population (CFS) and showed it to be blood borne and transmissible.

### ***What is the link between XMRV and ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and other neuro-immune diseases?***

Our initial research showed that 67% of the ME/CFS patient samples tested positive for XMRV. Our current mission is to determine the existence of XMRV in other neuro-immune diseases such as fibromyalgia, gulf war illness and autism. Investigations of additional cohorts of CFS patients continue to reveal new insights into XMRV in human disease. Additional work has replicated the findings of our initial discovery.

### ***Where can I get tested for XMRV?***

The WPI has licensed the technology described in Lombardi et al., to its CLIA clinical laboratory and to R.E.D. laboratories Belgium. Clinical testing can not be done at WPI research laboratories. Currently there is no FDA approved diagnostic test for XMRV.

***How is XMRV transmitted?***

XMRV research is in its infancy. Lombardi et al. demonstrated the potential for blood borne transmission of XMRV. Many questions remain concerning the transmissibility of XMRV; human retroviruses have never been shown to be airborne. Additional research must be done to prove if XMRV is the **cause** of human disease.

***What is M.E or CFS?***

The term “chronic fatigue syndrome” was coined by the CDC and is often substituted for a similar disease, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, (M.E.), a disease that has been recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) since 1969 as a distinct organic neurological disorder. (G.93.3.) M.E. (CFS) is a complex systemic disease that is estimated to affect over one million Americans and 17 million people worldwide. CFS has traditionally been diagnosed by the exclusion of other similarly presenting conditions, such as MS and lupus, and by a series of symptoms; making the diagnosis an expensive and difficult process.

***Can you catch ME/CFS?***

Doctors have reported community outbreaks of ME/CFS. In addition ME/CFS and other similar diseases have been found in more than one family member at the same time.

***What can my doctor do for me if I test positive to the XMRV virus?***

If you test XMRV positive you may qualify for future clinical trials. We anticipate clinical trials to be available in the near future, because several anti retrovirals used in HIV AIDS have been shown to be effective in the laboratory setting.

***Is XMRV airborne?***

No, retroviruses have never been shown to be airborne.

***What can I do if I am XMRV positive and sick?***

You can participate in clinical trials and research programs for XMRV. Your participation will be vital to scientists and physicians to develop XMRV therapeutics and future diagnostics, as quickly as possible.