



**EUROPEAN  
SCIENCE  
FOUNDATION**

## **ESF Exploratory Workshop on Links between Visceral Dysfunction and Affective Disorders**

31 August - 3 September 2006

Graz, Schloss St. Martin, Austria

### **Organization**

Peter Holzer, Medical University of Graz

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### **Key points to be addressed in the workshop**

1. Functional bowel disorders such as irritable bowel syndrome and mood disorders affect 10-20 % of the adult population.
2. From epidemiological studies it is emerging that there is a significant comorbidity of functional bowel disorders with anxiety, depression and other psychiatric disorders.
3. The underlying links between bowel dysfunction and mood disturbances are not understood because there is too little interaction between gastroenterologists and neuroscientists.
4. The workshop brings together experts in gastroenterology, neuropharmacology, neuroimmunology, neuroendocrinology and psychiatry to explore the genetic, neurochemical and systems-biological relationships between affective and functional bowel disorders and to conceive new therapeutic strategies that are badly needed.
5. The workshop addresses a novel field of biomedical science and may open up a new direction of interdisciplinary research into an European health issue of high socio-economic impact.
6. The ultimate intention of the workshop is to explore the opportunity of a collaborative European research project in this new emerging field.

### **Preliminary workshop programme**

Session 1: The gut-brain axis from a gastroenterological and psychiatric perspective

Session 2: Experimental models to study the geno- and phenotype of gastrointestinal and mood disorders

Session 3: Genetic, molecular and neurochemical basis of mood disturbances and their impact on brain-gut interactions

Session 4: General structured discussion

### **Contact**

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