



The Initiative of German Practice-Based Research Networks – DESAM-ForNet: Now and in the Future

Since 2020: major steps forward

Research infrastructure in primary care to generate high-quality, guideline-relevant evidence - 23 university sites for general practice and primary care, organized in 6 practice-based research networks, are developing the DESAM-ForNet Initiative since 2020. Family practice, as a place of prevention, diagnosis, therapy, follow-up and long-term care, opens itself to research for cross-sectoral knowledge-generating care. Throughout Germany, 1360 research practices have already been integrated; by the end of the funding period, the number is expected to reach 1730.

A particular strength of the DESAM-ForNet Initiative is to develop the potential for practice-relevant, patient-oriented research at local, regional and national levels:

At local level, university sites work closely with family practice teams, patients and citizens. The focus is on implementing site-specific participation policies, recruiting and training GP teams, and conducting trials.

At national level, the DESAM-ForNet coordination office supports cooperation and consensus-building processes in working groups with joint decision-making in the DESAM-ForNet steering committee.

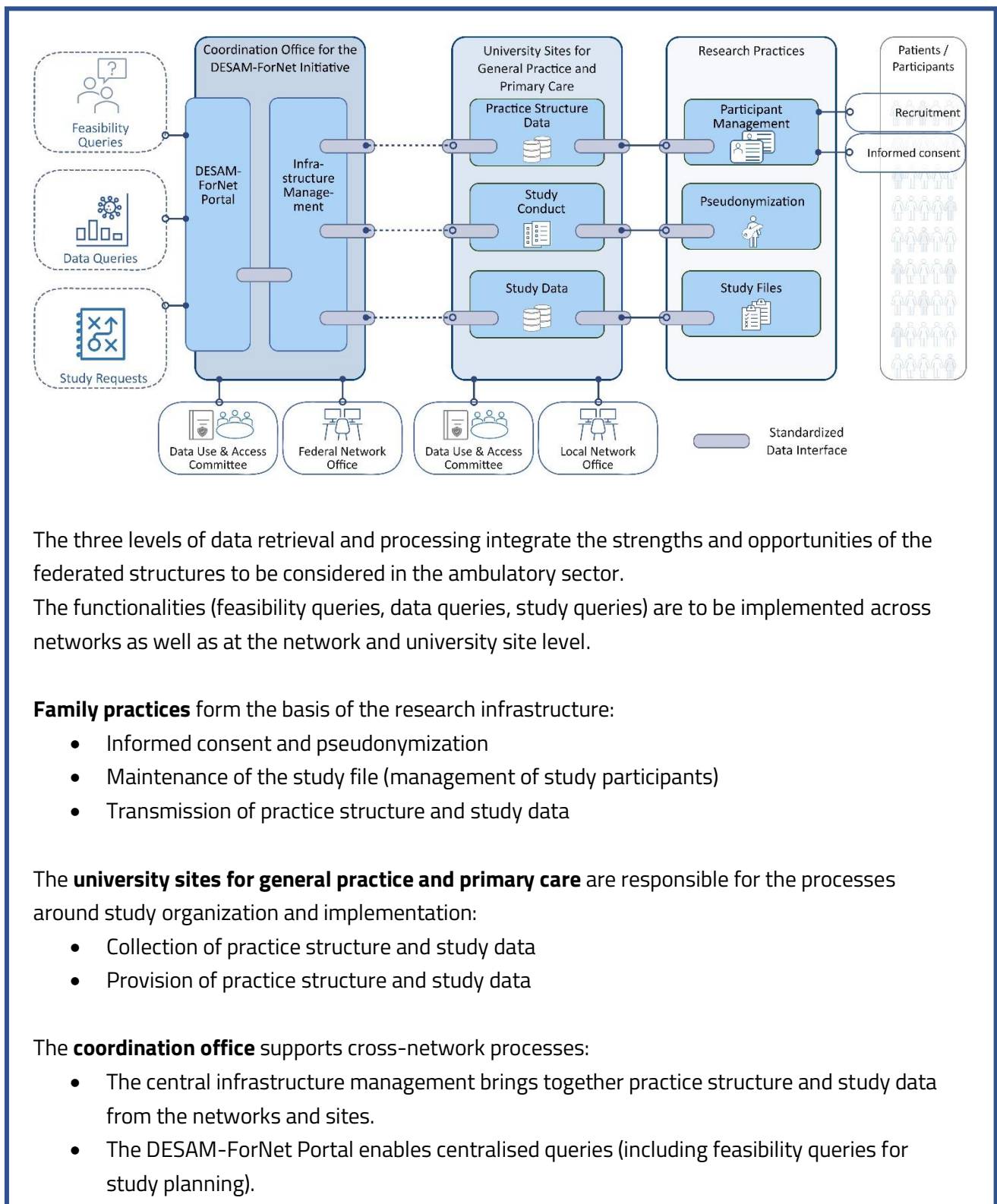
By 2025: the results of our cross-network collaboration

- Participation of citizens, patients and family practice teams as our standard: Development of DESAM-ForNet research projects "from practice, for practice"
- Research-ready concept with modular qualification concept
- Establishment of the IT infrastructure for cross-network standardised data collection and processing to support nationwide research and study implementation (see graphic)
- Cross-network exchange of practice structure data with the Practice Relationship Management System as the first component of the IT infrastructure

From 2025: practice-based research networks as an essential part of university medicine for cross-sector research

The expansion of ambulatory patient care, digital transformation and demographic change imply the need for a cross-sector research data infrastructure. The triad of research, teaching, and patient care, which is self-evident in university medicine, should also be applied in the primary care setting. Therefore, building on the results of the first funding phase, we call for the continuation of the practice-based research networks as an independent part of university medicine. All 36 university sites for General Practice and Primary Care in Germany have the scientific expertise to conduct clinical studies and studies of health services research – to strengthen primary care with evidence that helps patients in the family practice setting.

Our concept of a cross-network research data infrastructure



The three levels of data retrieval and processing integrate the strengths and opportunities of the federated structures to be considered in the ambulatory sector.

The functionalities (feasibility queries, data queries, study queries) are to be implemented across networks as well as at the network and university site level.

Family practices form the basis of the research infrastructure:

- Informed consent and pseudonymization
- Maintenance of the study file (management of study participants)
- Transmission of practice structure and study data

The **university sites for general practice and primary care** are responsible for the processes around study organization and implementation:

- Collection of practice structure and study data
- Provision of practice structure and study data

The **coordination office** supports cross-network processes:

- The central infrastructure management brings together practice structure and study data from the networks and sites.
- The DESAM-ForNet Portal enables centralised queries (including feasibility queries for study planning).