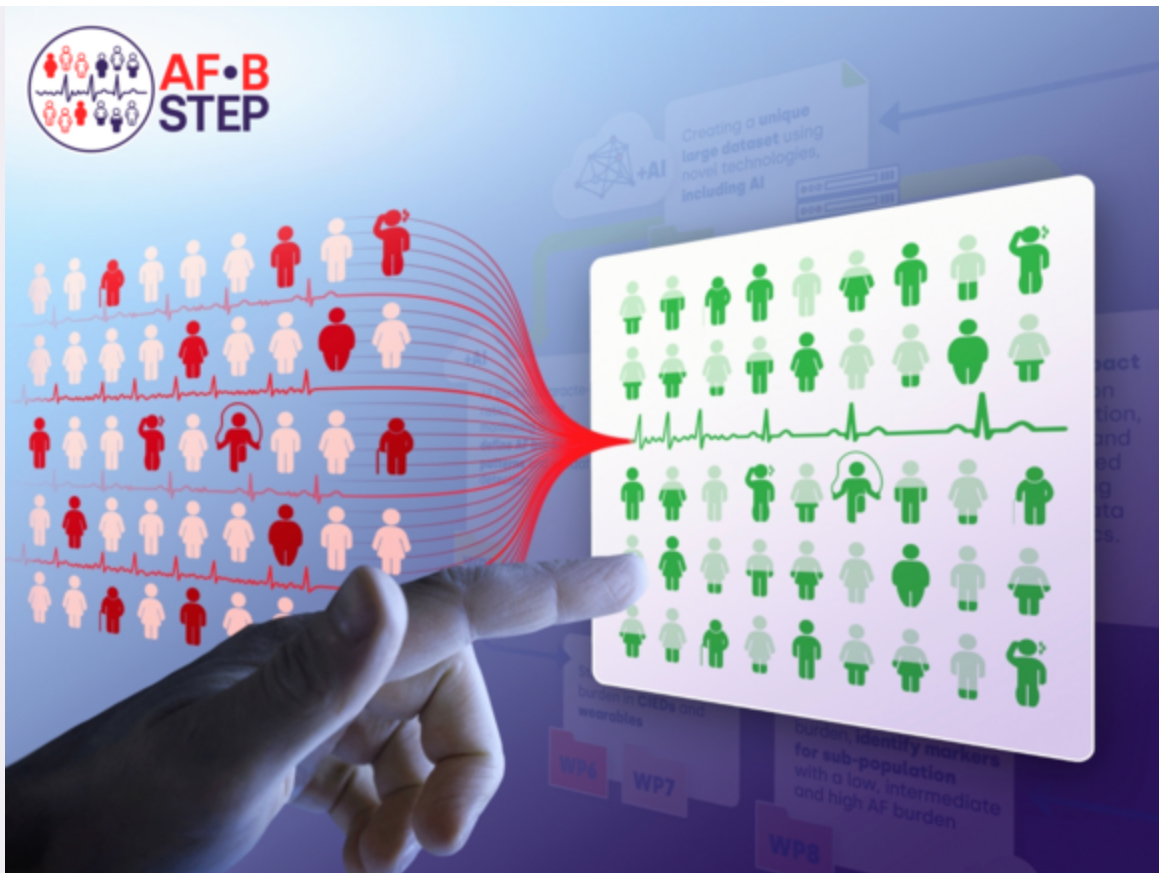




Welcome to the AF-B-STEP Newsletter

We are thrilled to share the first edition of the AF-B-STEP Newsletter with you.

AF-B-STEP is working to redefine Atrial Fibrillation beyond a simple “yes or no” diagnosis, focusing instead on the factors that matter most for patients. By advancing a more comprehensive understanding of AF, the project aims to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease while improving patients’ quality of life.

Running from 2026 to 2029, AF-B-STEP brings together a unique public–private partnership of 18 partners from across Europe and beyond, combining expertise from academia, healthcare, industry, and patient organizations to drive innovation in AF research and care.

These newsletters will be published bi-annually and provide regular updates on the project's progress, achievements, and upcoming events. In addition, each issue will spotlight a key topic related to AF-B-STEP and its mission.

We hope you enjoy reading and look forward to sharing more information on the project's progress and achievements in the years to come.

Why AF-B-STEP Matters

Voices from the Team



Prof. Dr. Paulus Kirchhof

Project Coordinator and Director of the Department of Cardiology at University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, stated: *"The results are intended to help physicians make more precise decisions about who needs which treatment based on the AF burden. The goal of AF-B-STEP is to contribute to a measurable reduction in strokes and heart failure in the long term, while simultaneously avoiding unnecessary treatments in people with a low atrial fibrillation burden."*

To achieve this goal, AF-B-STEP will deploy a dedicated multidisciplinary team of experts to review and analyze data from a wide range of clinical studies and patient cohorts.



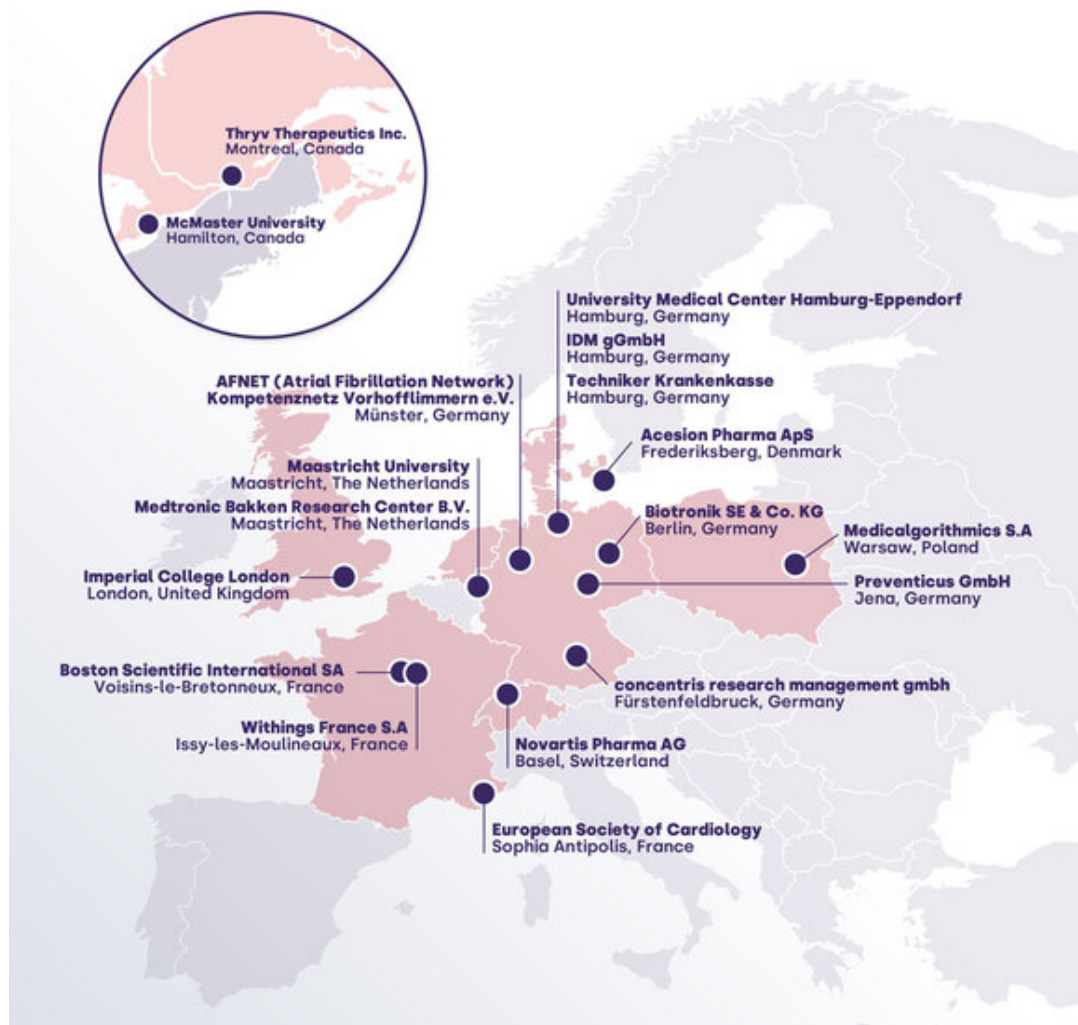
Mirko De Melis

Industry Lead at Medtronic Bakken Research Center, stated: *"By addressing the unmet needs in atrial fibrillation management, this large, concerted collaboration will be foundational to help guide future efforts to improve the management of AF globally."*

Therefore, we strongly believe that the outcomes of AF-B-STEP will transform clinical decision-making by providing robust evidence on the relationship between atrial fibrillation burden and patient outcomes.

AF-B-STEP Consortium

18 partners – one goal



The AF-B-STEP consortium brings together a unique public-private partnership of leading academic institutions, clinical experts, patient organisations, health insurers, and industry innovators across Europe and beyond. Together, the consortium combines scientific excellence, technological innovation, regulatory insight, and patient perspectives to deliver results with real-world impact

[For more information](#)

9 Work Packages

One Shared Ambition

WP1 – Dissemination, Communication, Exploitation and Training

Leader: AFNET | Co-leader: ESC

Ensuring that project results reach scientists, clinicians, patients, policymakers, and other stakeholders through communication, education,

WP2 – Data Integration, Ethics and Consent Management

Leader: UKE | Co-leader: Techniker

Krankenkasse

Managing, integrating, and harmonising large-scale datasets while ensuring compliance with

training, and engagement activities

ethical, legal, and data governance standards.

WP3 – Characterisation of AF Burden

Leader: Maastricht University | Co-leader: Boston Scientific

Describing AF burden across diverse populations and datasets, validating detection algorithms, and analysing AF episode patterns, progression, and screening strategies.

WP4 – Effect of AF Burden on Major Clinical Outcomes and Cost-Effectiveness

Leader: UKE | Co-leader: Novartis

Investigating how AF burden influences stroke, heart failure, cardiovascular death, treatment decisions, healthcare costs, and cost-effectiveness.

WP5 – Effects of AF Burden and Outcomes Beyond Stroke

Leader: UKE | Co-leader: Acesion

Exploring the impact of AF burden on cognitive and heart function, quality of life, and patient-reported outcomes and experiences.

WP6 – Standards for AF Burden Reporting by Cardiac Implantable Electronic Devices

Leader: UKE | Co-leader: Biotronik

Developing harmonised approaches to AF burden reporting across implantable devices such as pacemakers and defibrillators.

WP7 – Standards for AF Burden Reporting by Intermittent Rhythm Monitors

Leader: McMaster University | Co-leader: Withings

Comparing monitoring technologies and establishing standardised reporting parameters for wearable and intermittent monitoring devices.

WP8 – Predictors of AF Burden and Pathways for Targeted Rhythm Monitoring

Leader: Imperial College London | Co-leader: Preventicus

Using clinical data, biomarkers, and AI-based models to identify predictors of AF burden and support more targeted monitoring strategies.

WP9 – Project Management

Leader: UKE | Co-leader: Medtronic

Ensuring the overall coordination, governance, communication, financial management, reporting, quality control, and risk management of the project.

[For more information](#)

The First Six Months **Looking Back**



Following the launch of AF-B STEP, the Kick-off Meeting in Amsterdam brought the entire consortium together for two days of engaging discussions and knowledge sharing. The meeting provided an important opportunity to align on the project's vision, establish common ways of working, and set the direction for the activities across all work packages. A key message emerging from the meeting was the value of close collaboration and open communication among partners. Maintaining strong connections between work packages will be essential to ensure that activities remain aligned and that the project progresses in a coordinated and effective way.

Since the launch of the project, the consortium has made significant progress across several key topics. The project website has been finalised and social media channels are helping to build visibility and engagement within the cardiovascular community. Work has also progressed on the development of the project's data platform and Data Management Plan, which will support the secure and harmonised use of data across studies.

Important advances have been made in the technical validation activities, while clinical work packages continue to generate evidence through ongoing analyses and systematic reviews. In parallel, researchers are exploring the impact of atrial fibrillation burden on patients, including its relationship with symptoms, quality of life, and patient experiences.

The consortium is also working towards the standardisation of atrial fibrillation burden reporting from cardiac implantable electronic devices, with a scientific manuscript currently in preparation.

Events Where We've Been

Over the past months, the project was presented at several conferences and events, providing opportunities to share progress, engage with stakeholders, and promote collaboration across the cardiovascular research community.



DGK - Mannheim -April 2026

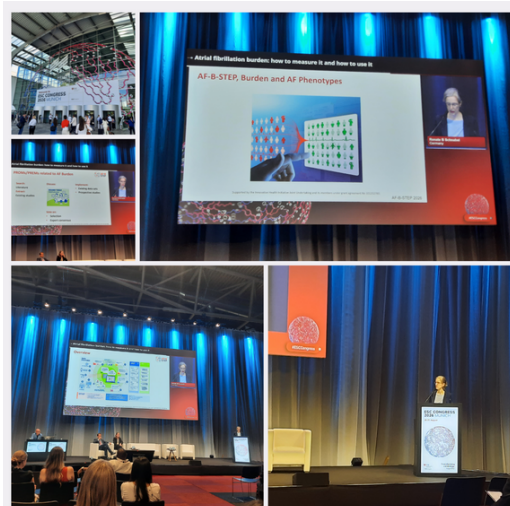
The Annual Meeting of the German Cardiac Society provided a valuable opportunity for consortium partners to meet in person, exchange ideas, and strengthen collaboration across the project. The picture shows Project Coordinator Prof. Paulus Kirchhof and Work Package 1 Lead Prof. Daniel Steven together at the event.

In addition, PD Dr. Moritz Sinner presented the AF-B-STEP project as part of his talk, highlighting the project's objectives and progress to the wider cardiovascular research community.



EHRA Congress - Paris -April 2026

The session *"Europe Leading the Way: Groundbreaking EU-funded Trials in Electrophysiology"* brought together several EU-funded initiatives, highlighting new approaches across atrial fibrillation management, risk stratification, and innovative treatment strategies in electrophysiology. During this session, Project coordinator, Prof. Paulus Kirchhof presented the strengths and aims of AF-B-STEP.



ESC Congress - Munich - August 2026

Prof. Renate B. Schnabel presented *"Atrial fibrillation burden: how to measure it and how to use it"* during the special session on *"Multimorbidity in elderly patients with atrial fibrillation"*.

In addition, the consortium held its 2nd Steering Committee Meeting in Munich, bringing together partners from across Europe and Canada. The



meeting provided a great setting to discuss the latest project developments, exchange ideas, and coordinate the next steps.

Scientific Publications

Take a Look

Pre-procedural time spent in atrial fibrillation using intermittent ECG monitoring is associated with arrhythmia recurrence after ablation: the ISOLATION cohort study

[Read](#)

AF-B-STEP: A global collaboration to reduce the burden of atrial fibrillation and advance its quantification and treatment

[Read](#)

Good to Know

Did You Know?

A common misconception is that Atrial Fibrillation is a simple “yes or no” condition. In reality, AF affects each person differently. While some patients experience occasional episodes with little impact on their daily lives, others may face frequent symptoms that significantly affect their wellbeing and increase their risk of complications.

Understanding these differences is essential to improving patient care. This is why AF-B-STEP is working to move beyond a binary diagnosis and focus on AF burden—capturing the true impact of AF on patients’ health and quality of life.

In Case You Missed It

At the first AF-B-STEP Consortium Meeting, project partners took part in a series of short video interviews discussing the project's vision and objectives. Watch the videos to learn more about the consortium, its ambitions, and how AF-B-STEP aims to improve the understanding and management of atrial fibrillation.

[Watch the Videos](#)

Coming Up

1st Patient Event: Our first patient-focused event will take place during the German Heart Weeks on 26 November 2026 in Cologne. Further information and programme details will be available soon on our website.

1st Masterclass in AF Burden: A collection of expert recordings will provide valuable insights into AF burden and related topics. The Masterclass will be available online until the end of 2026.

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Kompetenznetz Vorhofflimmern e.V., Mendelstraße 11, 48149 Münster
 Tel.: 0251 27600160, info@kompetenznetz-vorhofflimmern.de
 Münster Local Court, Association register number VR 5003
 USt.-Id.-Nr.: DE274366663

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