

PRESS RELEASE
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NCRI

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CALL FOR INCREASE IN LUNG CANCER RESEARCH

Active steps are required to increase the amount of lung cancer research being carried out in the UK, according to the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) in a report* unveiled at the NCRI Cancer Conference in Birmingham today.

Lung cancer is the most common cancer in the world and accounts for 22 per cent of all cancer deaths in Britain, but it only attracts 3.9 per cent of funding spent on research into specific types of cancer. British research into lung cancer is among the best in the world, but there is a clear need for more of it.

The NCRI report lays out reasons why lung cancer falls behind in terms of research activity and suggests a number of ways to tackle these deep-seated problems and ensure that lung cancer receives a proportionate amount of funding in future.

Actions include raising the profile of lung cancer research, improving the collection of essential tissue samples for research, and initiating new research into the needs of lung cancer patients. The report also discusses the feasibility of funding research on screening for lung cancer.

Peter Cardy, Chief Executive of Macmillan Cancer Support and Chair of the group responsible for the report, said: "Achieving our ultimate goal of improving the experience of lung cancer patients will take time and require sustained effort from research funders and the research community. Sadly the outlook is poor for people diagnosed with lung cancer and we hope that this research will go some way towards changing this.

"There is no quick fix for the problems highlighted in the report, but the NCRI is committed to helping organisations work together to co-ordinate their efforts to best effect. We were also pleased to find that there was no reluctance to fund research into this much needed area."

Mike Unger, Chief Executive of the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation, said: "Lung cancer is often perceived as being difficult to study and difficult to treat successfully. While there are some issues particular to lung cancer that can make it hard to study, these problems are not insurmountable and efforts must be made to ensure lung cancer patients receive the full benefits that world-class scientific research can bring. We hope the actions in this report will go some way towards this."

Professor Mike Richards, National Cancer Director and Chair of the NCRI, said: "In this report, we have identified the priority areas that need to be addressed, and started to put in place the mechanisms required to respond to the national shortfall in lung cancer research.

"Some NCRI Partners have also allocated new funding for lung cancer, but it is not just a question of money. The research community must engage with us to boost the overall number and quality of research projects put forward for funding."

ENDS

For media enquiries please contact Michael Regnier in the NCRI press office on 07918 608 599 or, out of hours, the duty press officer on 07050 264 059. *

NOTES FOR EDITORS

“Lung Cancer Research in the UK 2006, Report of the NCRI Strategic Planning Group on Lung Cancer”, October 2006

Breakdown of research funding by cancer site (percentage indicates percentage of spend that can be attributed to a disease site):

Cancer site	% of total		% of site specific cancer research spend‡
	Incidence (2002)†	Mortality (2004)†	
Lung	14%	22%	3.9%*
Colon and Rectal	13%	11%	11.9%
Breast	15%	8%	19.5%
Prostate	12%	7%	8.3%

† Source: Cancer Research UK (2006), CancerStats – <http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/cancerstats>

‡ Source: NCRI Cancer Research Database 2005

* If funding for tobacco control is included, this figure is 4.4%

Research into tobacco control was not considered during the production of this report. This is because in 2004, the NCRI launched the National Prevention Research Initiative (NPRI), a programme of research projects aimed at preventing cancer, diabetes and heart disease. The NPRI funds research aimed at influencing health behaviours, including minimising smoking, the major cause of lung cancer.

About the NCRI:

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) was established in April 2001. It is a partnership between government, the voluntary sector and the private sector, with the primary mission of maximising patient benefit that accrues from cancer research in the UK through coordination of effort and joint planning towards an integrated national strategy for cancer research. www.ncri.org.uk

The NCRI consists of: The Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI); The Association for International Cancer Research; The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Breast Cancer Campaign; Cancer Research UK; Department of Health; Economic and Social Research Council; Leukaemia Research Fund; Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research; Macmillan Cancer Support; Marie Curie Cancer Care; The Medical Research Council; Northern Ireland Health and Personal Social Services Research & Development Office; Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation; Scottish Executive Health Department; Tenovus; Wales Office of Research and Development for Health & Social Care; Wellcome Trust; and Yorkshire Cancer Research.

AstraZeneca is the gold sponsor for the NCRI Cancer Conference 2006.