

PRESS RELEASE

Sunday 03 November 2013

FUNDING FOR CANCER RESEARCH INCREASES BY OVER 60 PER CENT IN 10 YEARS

Funding for cancer research by National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Partners has increased by 62 per cent in the 10 years up to 2011 and now amounts to over £521 million a year. But they warn this rise has levelled off in recent years due to the austere economic times.

The new analysis*, published today at the NCRI Cancer Conference in Liverpool, highlights the significant investment in research to understand more about the biology of the disease and develop better treatments for cancer patients.

But there are still areas that need more funding. Amongst the sectors lagging behind are research into preventing cancer and studies to address the long term effects of cancer on survivors.

The greatest increase in research funding has been in new treatments. This, in part, reflects the growth of clinical research networks and Experimental Cancer Medicine Centres where the latest findings from the lab are brought through to benefit patients faster, the so-called 'bench to bedside' approach.

Over the last decade a consistent 60 per cent of cancer research funding has been spent on research that could apply to all types of cancer, with the remaining 40 per cent focused on research into particular cancers.

The strength of the NCRI Partnership is that it can identify the areas that need further investment. Specific NCRI initiatives have helped boost research investment into prevention and lung cancer – these have outstripped the average 60 per cent rise in spend. Though given the low starting point for these two areas it will still take time for the inequalities in funding to balance out.

Karen Kennedy, director of the NCRI, said: "Since the start of the NCRI Cancer Research Database we have been able to see the strengths and weaknesses in investment in cancer research. This knowledge has enabled the NCRI to set up initiatives to address gaps and has raised awareness of the need for research in specific areas amongst the research community more generally. But it's vital for cancer patients that investment in cancer research remains a priority despite the tougher economic times that funders must now operate under."

Shirley Harrison, lay member of the NCRI Board and a breast cancer patient, said "We've seen great progress and improvements in cancer research thanks to the funding from NCRI Partners. The strength in funding of research in biology and treatment is encouraging however, we need to ensure that other areas that are important to patients such as, prevention and survivorship research, are also appropriately addressed."

Investment in brain, oesophageal and pancreatic cancers have also significantly increased over the decade. Highlighting the low level of research investment into

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these cancers, which also have poor outcomes for patients, has encouraged funders to consider new ways to boost work in these areas. Although the levels of investment are still relatively low the change in funding is in the right direction.

Dr Harpal Kumar, chair of the NCRI and chief executive of Cancer Research UK, said: "It's through research that we're gaining the insights into cancer that will lead to better treatments for patients, so it's great news that we've seen this huge increase in funding over the last ten years.

"But we still need to encourage funders and researchers to come together and take steps to improve the investment in research into cancers that still have a poor outlook such as brain and pancreatic cancers."

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Notes to editors

*NCRI Cancer research spend in the UK 2002-2011: An overview of the research funded by NCRI Partners. 2013. Available from www.ncri.org.uk/resources/publications

About the NCRI Cancer Conference

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference is the UK's major forum for showcasing the best British and international cancer research. The Conference offers unique opportunities for networking and sharing knowledge by bringing together world-leading experts from all cancer research disciplines. The ninth annual NCRI Cancer Conference is taking place from 3-6 November 2013 at the BT Convention Centre in Liverpool. Roche is the principal sponsor of the 2013 NCRI Cancer Conference.

For more information visit conference.ncri.org.uk

About the NCRI

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) was established in 2001. It is a UK-wide partnership between the government, charity and industry which promotes cooperation in cancer research.

NCRI members are: the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI); Association for International Cancer Research; Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Breast Cancer Campaign; Cancer Research UK; Children with Cancer UK; Department of Health; Economic and Social Research Council; Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research; Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research; Macmillan Cancer Support; Marie Curie Cancer Care; Medical Research Council; Northern Ireland Health and Social Care (Research & Development Office); Prostate Cancer UK; Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation; Scottish Government Health Directorates (Chief Scientist Office); Tenovus; Welsh Government (National Institute for Social Care and Health Research); The Wellcome Trust; and Yorkshire Cancer Research.

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