



MEDIA RELEASE

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Children's Cancer Institute and Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick announce ground breaking clinical trial for childhood cancer in Australia

New trial offers exciting new treatment approach for aggressive relapsed neuroblastoma

[Children's Cancer Institute](#) and Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick have today announced a major, new international clinical trial designed to help combat neuroblastoma – the most common solid tumour to affect infants and young children today.

Coinciding with International Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in September, the clinical trial offers an exciting new treatment for children diagnosed with relapsed neuroblastoma. The trial uses an existing small molecule drug, called Difluoromethylornithine (DFMO), previously used for treating African Sleeping Sickness.

Children's Cancer Institute's research has shown that DFMO, when used in combination with modern chemotherapy, attacks neuroblastoma much more effectively than chemotherapy drugs alone.

The clinical trial, led by Dr David Ziegler, Paediatric Oncologist for the Kids Cancer Centre at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick and Group Leader of Targeted Therapies Program at Children's Cancer Institute, is an international trial being run across 14 hospitals in North America. As one of Australia's leading specialist medical centres for children, Sydney Children's Hospital is the only site in the country to host the trial.

Dr David Ziegler said: "The drug DFMO essentially makes the current chemotherapies more effective in killing neuroblastoma cells. To initiate this trial we developed a new formulation of DFMO that can be given to children as a syrup. We hope that this will be a new way forward for children diagnosed with high-risk neuroblastoma."

Professor Michelle Haber AM, Executive Director, Children's Cancer Institute said: "Currently, a child with high-risk neuroblastoma who relapses after initial treatment is considered incurable. Children's Cancer Institute, along with our partner Sydney Children's Hospital, is determined to put an end to this devastating disease. If the DFMO clinical trial proves successful it could fundamentally change the way we approach neuroblastoma treatment.

"Neuroblastoma accounts for 15 per cent of all paediatric cancer deaths in Australia and high-risk neuroblastoma has a survival rate of just 1 in 2. This is why it's so critical that we progress our discoveries into actual treatments for kids as quickly as possible."

The trial is supported by Australian Lions Childhood Cancer Research Foundation, Kids Cancer Project, Cancer Institute NSW and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), and internationally by New Approaches to Neuroblastoma Therapy (NANT).

For more information or to further support the fight against childhood cancer, visit www.childrenscancerinstitute.org.au. For more information on Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick please visit www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au.

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For further information or interviews, please contact Access PR or Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick:

Rachael McKenzie, Access PR (on behalf of Children's Cancer Institute), 0433 890 127,

rachaelm@accesspr.com.au

Sam Pearson, Access PR (on behalf of Children's Cancer Institute), 0415 271 911,

sam@accesspr.com.au

Nikkie Beltran, Public Affairs Officer, Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, 02 9382 4818, 0458 234 214, nikkie.beltran@health.nsw.gov.au

About Children's Cancer Institute

Children's Cancer Institute is the only independent medical research institute in Australia wholly dedicated childhood cancer research, existing solely to cure childhood cancer and improve the quality of life for survivors. Childhood cancer is different from adult cancer therefore Children's Cancer Institute's role is vital. Despite progress, cancer still kills more children than any other disease. Children's Cancer Institute opened its own research laboratories in 1984 and has since grown to employ more than 195 staff and students, establishing a national and international reputation for scientific excellence. For more information, visit www.childrencancerinstitute.org.au

As part of International Childhood Cancer Awareness Month this September, Children's Cancer Institute will hold the first [Build for a Cure](#) fundraising campaign. The initiative will see a four-bedroom, two-bathroom, fully furnished home built and sold within 21 days, with all proceeds going towards funding vital childhood cancer research. In addition to this, \$2 donation tokens for Children's Cancer Institute will be available for purchase in Big W stores. Shoppers will also be encouraged to write a message of support for kids with cancer which will then be displayed in-store. Following this, the \$2 tokens will be available at Woolworths Petrol nationally throughout October.

Find us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram - @KidsCancerInst; #buildforacure

About Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick

Each year, Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick cares for approximately 78,000 seriously ill and injured children from across NSW, Australia and beyond in a family-centred, multidisciplinary, expert environment.

Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick is one the country's leading centres in paediatric clinical and research excellence and is part of The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network (SCHN), the largest network of hospital and services for children in Australia.

In 2014, the Kids Cancer Centre at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick celebrates its 50th year of treating children with cancer. Two thirds of all children treated at the Kids Cancer Centre go onto clinical research trials that could not only benefit them but others who may tread their path in the future. Since the Fifties, it has seen incremental change in the survival rates of children's cancer, going from a 0 per cent survival rate then to 85 per cent today.

For more information visit www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au