

Southampton leads international team awarded £4 million for cutting-edge cancer research

Southampton scientists are leading a team of international experts who are set to receive a multi-million pound grant from Cancer Research UK, to devise new immunotherapy treatments for cancer.

Experts from the Cancer Research UK Centres in Southampton* and Oxford**, working with a leading research institute in California*** will receive around £4 million over the next five years.

Southampton is leading one of four research networks to secure a significant cash injection to speed up progress by working more closely across the whole country, bringing the best experts together, wherever they work.

This is part of a £16 million UK-wide initiative – the charity's Centres' Network Accelerator Awards**** – to help the fight against cancers that are most difficult to treat.

This group is already renowned for its cutting-edge research into innovative immunotherapies, which work by 'waking up' the patient's immune system and harnessing its power to kill cancer.

The new funding will help the researchers investigate why some tumours respond so well to immunotherapy, with the aim of identifying patients who are most likely to benefit from these types of treatment, and finding ways of making it more effective for more people.

They will focus on melanoma, lung and oesophageal cancers, for which new types of treatment are badly needed.

The research project will benefit from the new Centre for Cancer Immunology, currently being built on the Southampton General Hospital site. The Centre, which is expected to open in 2017, will bring world leading cancer scientists under one roof and enable interdisciplinary teams to expand clinical trials and develop lifesaving drugs.

Professor Tim Elliott, who is based at the University of Southampton and is Director of the Centre for Cancer Immunology, is a lead researcher for the new CRUK project which could help to save the lives of more people with cancer in the city - and across the UK - in the future.

He said: "We're delighted to have been awarded this grant from Cancer Research UK to further our understanding of how immunotherapies work. This investment is vital to help us improve on these treatments and help avoid any unnecessary side effects for patients.

“We need to understand why immunotherapies can be so successful in treating some people – making even advanced cancer vanish without a trace – but not as effective in others.

“Research such as this could ultimately lead to better ways to tailor treatment to individuals, giving them the best possible chance to beat their cancer.”

Cancer Research UK’s Centres’ Network Accelerator Awards aim to encourage collaboration between research centres across the UK to inspire new approaches to beating cancer and help turn discoveries made in the lab into better treatments for patients faster.

Dr Iain Foulkes, executive director for research funding at Cancer Research UK, said: “Effective partnerships are crucial for delivering the greatest science and boosting advancements in fighting cancer.

“We’re excited to be investing in collaborative and innovative research in Southampton and across the UK. It’s by working together and uniting expertise that we will accelerate cutting-edge research and save more lives.”

For more information about the new Centre for Cancer Immunology visit www.southampton.ac.uk/youreit

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Notes to Editors

*The Southampton Cancer Research UK Centre is a partnership between Cancer Research UK, University of Southampton and University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust

** The Oxford Cancer Research UK Centre

*** The La Jolla Institute of Allergy and Immunology

**** The Centres’ Network Accelerator Awards provide infrastructure support to research centres in order to encourage collaboration between different organisations and boost ‘bench to bedside’ science. <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/funding-for-researchers/how-we-deliver-research/about-our-centres>

About Cancer Research UK

- Cancer Research UK is the world’s leading cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research.
- Cancer Research UK’s pioneering work into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer has helped save millions of lives.
- Cancer Research UK receives no government funding for its life-saving research. Every step it makes towards beating cancer relies on every pound donated.
- Cancer Research UK has been at the heart of the progress that has already seen survival in the UK double in the last forty years.
- Today, 2 in 4 people will still be alive 10 years or more after a cancer diagnosis. Cancer Research UK’s ambition is to accelerate progress so that by 2034, 3 in 4 people will still be alive 10 years or more after a cancer diagnosis.

- Cancer Research UK supports research into all aspects of cancer through the work of over 4,000 scientists, doctors and nurses.
- Together with its partners and supporters, Cancer Research UK's vision is to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured.

- *For further information about Cancer Research UK's work or to find out how to support the charity, please call 0300 123 1022 or visit www.cancerresearchuk.org. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).*

Centre for Cancer Immunology

Building on its cancer immunology research expertise and recent successes in immunotherapy trials, the University of Southampton has launched a major fundraising campaign to raise £25m to open the UK's first dedicated Centre for Cancer Immunology at Southampton General Hospital in 2017. The Centre will be the first of its kind in the UK and will bring together world-leading specialists in a unique state-of-the art centre. The aim of the new Centre is to accelerate research progress, conduct more clinical trials and save more lives from cancer. Find out more about it at www.southampton.ac.uk/youreit

For more information

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