

A clinical trials cancer research program in the ACT

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The Canberra Hospital Medical Oncology Unit has continued clinical trial activities with the support of The Cancer Council ACT. Four Clinical Trial Coordinators are currently employed by the Unit to collect data and look after patients who enrol onto the studies. Funding is obtained through sponsorships from pharmaceutical companies for commercial studies, charitable donations and research grants; but not through the hospital. The department has formed links with a number of national collaborative research groups for the conduct of multicentre studies. These groups include: the Australasian Gastrointestinal Trials Group (AGITG), Australian and New Zealand Gynaecological Oncology Group (ANZGOG), the Australian and New Zealand Breast Cancer Study Group (ANZBCSG) and the Australian Lung Trials Group (ALTG).

The results of important studies that The Canberra Hospital has contributed to over the last 5 years have led to expanded indications for the following oncology drugs: oxaliplatin (Eloxatin), letrozole (Femara), docetaxel (Taxotere) and trastuzumab (Herceptin). Further trials conducted here have led to the registration of new drugs such as zoledronate (Zometa), pemetrexed (Alimta), erlotinib (Tarceva), sorafenib and sunitinib (Stutent). Patients participating on these clinical trials have benefited through early access to these agents prior to licensing. The wider availability of these drugs has made significant improvements to survival and quality of life of cancer sufferers.

The following is a list of current studies or studies in follow-up conducted at the Canberra Hospital that are supported in part by TCCACT grant:

Current studies:

A feasibility study of patient-initiated outpatient management of febrile neutropenia.

ESPAC –3: Phase III trial comparing 5FU and folinic acid versus gemcitabine in patients with resected pancreatic cancer.

SOFT: A Phase III trial evaluating the role of ovarian function suppression and the role of exemestane as adjuvant therapies for pre-menopausal women with endocrine responsive breast cancer.

Studies in follow-up:

ANZGOG 02 01: A phase II trial of weekly docetaxel (Taxotere) for patients with relapsed ovarian cancer who have previously received paclitaxel.

BIG 1-98: Randomised double blind phase III study of letrozole versus tamoxifen as adjuvant endocrine therapy in postmenopausal women with receptor positive breast cancer.

BIG2-98: Docetaxel sequentially or in combination with doxorubicin, followed by CMF (cyclophosphamide methotrexate and 5-fluorouracil), compared with doxorubicin alone or in combination with cyclophosphamide, followed by CMF, in the adjuvant treatment of node-positive breast cancer patients

BCIRG 005: A multicentre phase III randomized trial comparing docetaxel in combination with doxorubicin and cyclophosphamide (TAC) versus doxorubicin and cyclophosphamide followed by docetaxel (AC->T) as adjuvant treatment of operable breast cancer Her2neu negative patients with positive axillary lymph nodes.

BCIRG 006: Multicentre phase III randomized trial comparing doxorubicin and cyclophosphamide followed by docetaxel (AC->T) with doxorubicin and cyclophosphamide followed by docetaxel and trastuzumab (AC->TH) and with docetaxel, platinum salt and trastuzumab (TCH) in the adjuvant treatment of node positive and high risk node negative patients with operable breast cancer containing the Her2neu alteration.

CO.17: Phase III randomised study of cetuximab (Erbitux, C225) and best supportive care versus best supportive care in patients with pretreated metastatic epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR)-positive colorectal carcinoma.

GOG0201: Phase II trial of weekly docetaxel (Taxotere) for patients with relapsed ovarian cancer who have previously received paclitaxel

VINCAP: Phase II Study of intravenous vinorelbine (Navelbine) + capecitabine (Xeloda) in patients with advanced breast cancer.

ZEST: A double blind controlled trial of Zoloff's effects on symptoms and survival time in advanced cancer.

A full list of currently open clinical trials, research publications and activities are listed at this website <http://health.act.gov.au/oncology> under Medical Oncology Research.