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Tackling cancer

Birmingham is an internationally renowned centre for translational cancer research and cancer education.

Our work encompasses many aspects of cancer biology from basic laboratory science through to clinical trials on thousands of patients. Close links with the NHS means that laboratory discoveries can be seamlessly translated into new treatments for patients.

Birmingham's Cancer Research UK Clinical Trials Unit (CRCTU) is the largest cancer trials unit in the UK. It is responsible for design, implementation and analysis of trials in most types of cancer and covers everything from the first test of new therapies, to large studies comparing the potential of recently established drugs.

At the current time we have over 100 trials in preparation, recruitment or follow-up. Birmingham made a successful bid to become the UK's principal Trials unit for Childhood cancer and leukaemia trials and this will be fully implemented in April 2010.

A key strength of the trials unit is in developing new therapies to treat cancer using the immune system or through gene therapy. Immunotherapy looks at ways to use the body's natural immune responses in the fight against cancer. Gene therapy can be used treat cancer by blocking abnormal or replacing genes in cancer cells or repairing or replacing abnormal genes.

On the basis of current statistics it is estimated that one third of us will develop cancer in our lifetime. The Birmingham Centre is working to reduce this figure for the benefit of the current, and future, generations.

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