



Media Release

Melanoma research receives a massive funding boost

NSW cancer researchers from the Sydney Melanoma Unit have received over \$11 million to advance their world-leading research into the diagnosis and treatment of melanoma.

Australians have the highest rate of melanoma in the world, with incidence levels up to four times higher than the US and the UK, and up to ten times higher than most other countries.

Whilst it is the third most common cancer in Australia, it has proved to be one of the most difficult to manage. It most commonly affects those in the 30-45 year age group - people in the prime of their life- yet standard cancer treatments are often ineffective.

The Sydney Melanoma Unit is a group of cancer researchers and clinicians drawn from Westmead Millennium Institute, Newcastle Mater and Royal Prince Alfred Hospitals. It runs the largest melanoma treatment centre in the world, and with associated expertise in molecular diagnosis and treatment, provides our best hope for improving outcomes in people who develop, or are at risk of developing, melanoma.

This research group was recently recognised with a \$3.75 million Program Grant from the Cancer Institute NSW. Today the Hon Tony Abbott, Commonwealth Minister for Health, announced that the Unit has also been awarded a prestigious National Health and Medical Research Council Program Grant, providing a further \$7.8 million to support its vital research.

“Melanoma cells that have spread from their site of origin are notorious for being resistant to cancer treatment such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy” says Professor Richard Kefford, Chief Investigator of the successful Sydney Melanoma Unit NHMRC grant and researcher at Westmead Millennium Institute.

“These funds will allow us to progress our research into the molecular factors that determine an individual’s risk of melanoma, so that we can identify the type of melanoma they have and how that disease will respond to treatments. We can then create more effective treatments that are individualised to the patient.”

“Ultimately, our research will result in a better prognosis for melanoma sufferers in Australia and overseas.”

For more information about melanoma or to organise interviews, please contact Gayle McNaught on (02) 9845 9009 or 0423 797 388

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