



Advancing science; empowering parents; defeating neuroblastoma.

Research Strategy

Context

The Solving Kids' Cancer (SKC) (Europe) *Research Strategy* is based on SKC's *Strategic Plan 2017-2022*. SKC's focus is exclusively directed at neuroblastoma and will continue to be so for at least the timeline of the strategy.

The charity's aims are to provide children and young people with neuroblastoma more and better treatment options in the United Kingdom (UK); facilitate access to the best available treatments and most promising clinical trials; and support and enable best-in-class clinical research, accessible in the UK.

SKC aims to pursue a course which will benefit future children and the needs of children currently receiving therapy for neuroblastoma by providing options that will potentially benefit them the most, resulting in more children living longer and an increased number of children being cured of their disease. Furthermore, the charity's research strategy is underpinned by its unique position as a parent-led charity bringing insight from the experience and knowledge of its invaluable network of parents and families. International collaboration is of pivotal importance, playing to SKC's strengths as a charity with established links with like-minded advocates, charities, researchers and institutions across Europe and the US.

Research Strategy

The ultimate goal is to improve the outcome of children and adolescents with neuroblastoma; this will be achieved by facilitating new clinical approaches evaluated through evidence-based clinical trials in the UK. SKC's research strategy focuses on areas directed to this goal, which are currently under-resourced. Funding for these unmet needs will facilitate access for children and adolescents with neuroblastoma to the best available treatments and most promising clinical trials.

Therefore, the focus of the research strategy is on new and innovative therapeutic approaches. Delivering more and better options for children with relapsed or refractory neuroblastoma and identifying the population of children with neuroblastoma where there are currently no available clinical trials, and addressing these unmet needs are high priorities. The research strategy is cognisant of the burden of treatment these children experience, and long-term severe side-effects.

SKC also has a major role in advocacy in facilitating cooperative groups not only in the UK, but also in Europe: *Innovative Therapies for Children with Cancer (ITCC)*, *International Society of Paediatric Oncology Europe Neuroblastoma (SIOPEN)* and other initiatives to achieve common goals.

SKC wishes to work in collaboration with, and complement, other organisations nationally and internationally, working in collaboration with the *National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Study Group Neuroblastoma Study Subgroup*.

A key element of SKC's research strategy is the fostering of European collaboration (*ITCC* and *SIOPEN*) and trans-Atlantic (United States), including *New Approaches to Neuroblastoma Therapy (NANT)*. SKC

(Europe) shares the name with SKC (US) but each operates independently. However there are many areas of synergy and they work very closely in partnership especially the funding of trials.

This research strategy will be reviewed annually and will be discussed with patient advocates.

Research Funding

SKC will support the facilitation of clinical trials, including operational aspects, pre-clinical research which is a precursor and essential to opening clinical trials, biological studies, molecular monitoring, and genomics to underpin clinical trials and efforts to co-ordinate and link clinical trials internationally. SKC will also consider funding added-value infrastructure costs to enable the implementation of its research strategy and; pre-clinical international collaboration leading to the design and development of truly international clinical studies.

SKC will also consider other initiatives to improve neuroblastoma patient outcomes.

Funding of basic or translational laboratory research, with a long or medium translational timeline, is not within the scope of the charity.

Funding Mechanism

SKC will operate a *Competitive Funding Call* process by inviting applications for funding through a *Request for Application (RFA)*, congruent with their research strategy, initially at annual intervals at the same time of year. The RFAs will emphasize innovative clinical research applications and encourage multi-disciplinary collaboration. However, exceptionally applications may be considered out-with these calls, known as *Exceptional Funding Requests*. All applications will undergo external peer review, consultation with NCRI Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Study Group and review by the Scientific Advisory Board and the Trustees.

Collaborative funding applications with other charities will be considered.