

Towergate Partnership and Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity 2009 half year review

We are enormously grateful to all Towergate staff and customers who have succeeded in raising over £69,000 for Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity in the first 6 months of the year, a formidable 50% increase on what had been raised at the same point last year!

This means that both isolation rooms in cardiac general ward have been fully funded and all future monies raised will go towards Dr Nick Goulden's project, an amazing achievement in a year and a half and something which everyone at Towergate should be extremely proud of.

Towergate funded leukaemia research, led by Dr Nick Goulden: 6-month update

Thanks to Towergate's ongoing support, Dr Goulden and his team's research is fully up and running, with promising early results.

Eighteen children with acute lymphatic leukaemia (ALL) have now been investigated with a newly-purchased piece of specialist equipment. The machine – a flow cytometer – measures the number of leukaemic cells in a sample of patients' blood or bone marrow, at various points during their treatment. The researchers hope that this pioneering technique will provide vital information to determine how well children respond to chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

As research continues, this information will be compared to that gathered by more standard techniques, to ensure the results are meaningful and relevant.

Early indications are promising – the new test would seem to detect residual traces of leukaemia faster, and at a far lower cost per patient sample. Ultimately, this means patients at high risk of severe leukaemia may be able to have their treatment intensified to beat the disease, while those at lower risk can be withdrawn from chemo- and radiotherapy early, without compromising their health.

The early success has meant research is starting ahead of time on two further applications of the new technique (initially planned for year 2 of the project). The team have collected samples from 4 infants under 1 year of age with ALL, to see whether this research can be applied to improve their treatment. Additionally, they have started to look at data from 2 children with acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) – a rarer but much more aggressive form of leukaemia – to begin the process of scaling up their research to a larger study, due to launch early next year.

Tim Milne, senior clinical scientist on the project, expressed his thanks to all of Towergate's staff supporting the research: "Your generosity is allowing us to really forge ahead with these new research techniques. Having this head start means we're in a much better position to bring our work to a point where children begin to benefit. The research could help prevent relapse in children with leukaemia, reduce the number of children needing bone marrow transplants, and even scale up to improve outcomes in adult leukaemia patients - it's wonderful to see things develop."

Thank you so much for all of your continued support.