



CONNECT-1903: A new trial for brain cancer now available in Australia

ANZCHOG is pleased to announce that Australian children will be the first in the world to access a novel drug as a part of a new international clinical trial for a group of deadly brain tumours.

Approximately 40-50 Australian children are diagnosed with high grade gliomas (HGG) every year. HGG include the universally lethal diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG) and are the leading cause of childhood cancer mortality, as they are poorly responsive to even the most aggressive therapies.

CONNECT-1903 is the first study to examine if a novel drug larotrectinib can be used in the treatment of children with newly-diagnosed HGG. As larotrectinib targets tumours with a specific cancer-causing mutation (NTRK fusions), only children with this particular genetic change will be eligible for this trial (which can be up to 40% of children diagnosed with HGG in some age groups, such as babies and infants).

“At Perth Children’s Hospital, we are very excited to be the first centre in the world to offer our children access to this promising drug,” said Australian Principal Investigator Professor Nick Gottardo. “Larotrectinib has shown remarkable anti-tumour activity in other cancers with NTRK fusions, so we are delighted to have the opportunity to offer an agent that has the potential to improve outcomes for these children. It is vital that we offer this drug in the regulated setting of a clinical trial, so we can be confident about how well it is tolerated and its effectiveness in treating paediatric HGG.”

CONNECT-1903 is a clinical trial designed by COLlaborative Network for NEuro-oncology Clinical Trials (CONNECT), a recently established United States (U.S)-led consortium who are developing clinical trials for high-risk paediatric brain cancers by combining novel agents with traditional therapies. “This is the first opportunity for Australian children to participate in a trial run by CONNECT, and paves the way for access to other trials in the expanding CONNECT clinical trial portfolio,” noted Professor Gottardo. “At this stage, three centres will open CONNECT-1903 – Perth Children’s Hospital, Sydney Children’s Hospital and Queensland Children’s Hospital. We are hopeful that we can expand the number of Australian and New Zealand centres that will be able to access CONNECT trials in the future.”

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