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MEDIA RELEASE

CTM CRC and the Women's and Children's Hospital launch a new project to advance cancer immunotherapy

A new project at the CRC for Cell Therapy Manufacturing (CTM CRC), in collaboration with the Women's and Children's Hospital and through the generous support of the Women's and Children's Hospital Foundation may help to advance the curative potential of immunotherapies for cancer.

The project involves taking a patient's own immune cells and engineering them to recognise and attack tumours, thus harnessing the body's own healing potential. Known as chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T cell therapy, this approach has already produced remarkable responses in clinical trials involving patients with advanced blood cancers.

"Over the last few years, a high percentage of patients treated with CAR T cell therapies have seen their cancer regress to the point of being undetectable. The results seen with CAR T technology are essentially unprecedented and have the potential to revolutionise cancer treatment," says Dr Justin Coombs, General Manager at CTM CRC.

"These early clinical results have also generated enormous commercial interest in CAR T cell technologies, which is fuelling rapid technology innovation in the field."

"The aim of the CRC collaborative project is to explore the potential development of a new CAR T cell that could be active against a broad range of cancers, rather than just leukaemia, particularly those prevalent in childhood," Dr Coombs said.

Work on the project has begun at the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide and is being led by Associate Professor Simon Barry, a world expert in T cell biology.

Mr Sam Tolley, CEO of the Women's and Children's Hospital Foundation, said that the project was not only great news for cancer research, but also for South Australia.

"We are very proud to be supporting this ground breaking research at our iconic Women's and Children's Hospital."

“With around 50 children diagnosed with cancer every year in SA, this research has the potential to change many lives and may even lead to a cure. The future of our health relies upon quality research, so the more support we can offer in this area now, the better treatments families will have access to,” said Mr Tolley.

Dr Sherry Kothari, Managing Director at CTM CRC says that this project highlights the benefits that come from the collaborative approach to research in the CRC.

“With a mission to develop, translate and commercialise promising cell therapy technologies, CTM CRC is ideally positioned to take a lead approach in an innovative, collaborative project such as this. We have some tremendous capability in Australia and I am delighted that we can help harness some of this to create value in Australia for the benefit of patients here and abroad.”

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About the CRC for Cell Therapy Manufacturing

Cell therapy, the use of living cells to repair, replace or regenerate diseased or damaged tissue is transforming healthcare paradigms globally. Through intervention with novel coatings and smart materials technologies, the CRC for Cell Therapy Manufacturing (CTM CRC) will introduce efficiencies in cell therapy manufacturing processes, such as cell isolation, expansion and delivery. This, in turn, will decrease costs associated with manufacturing and facilitate the rapid translation of cell therapies into clinical practice.

CTM CRC has a vision to increase the accessibility, affordability and efficacy of cell therapies for previously incurable, or difficult to treat conditions such as type 1 diabetes, chronic wounds and immune-mediated diseases.

www.ctmcrc.com



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About the Women's and Children's Hospital

The Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH) is South Australia's only dedicated specialist children's hospital, as well as its largest maternity and obstetric service.

The world-class researchers at WCH are searching to develop new treatments and diagnostic methods for a variety of diseases, and are committed to providing excellence in medical and health care to achieve better health for our community.

www.wch.sa.gov.au



About the Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation (TeamKids)

The Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation (TeamKids) is a key supporter of research within the Women's and Children's Health Network. Committed to ensuring that mums, children and their families have access to the best medical care, TeamKids works in partnership with the South Australian community to achieve positive long-term outcomes and assists in advancing research to prevent disease, search for cures and improve quality of life.

www.teamkids.com.au

