

Clinical Trials at The Christie: Fact sheet

Clinical trials aim to discover if a new treatment is safe, tolerable and whether it works better than established treatments. Such studies offer important opportunities for cancer patients to access the most innovative treatments, and can give them the best possible chance of survival or extended life.

First into human and Phase 1 trials need specialist facilities and expertise and this means that they are usually carried out at specialist hospitals like the Christie. Clinical staff with expertise in this cutting edge field work very closely with the Paterson Institute for Cancer Research, the University of Manchester, Cancer Research UK and the Wolfson Medical Imaging Centre.

This close team approach which brings together scientists and clinical staff helps to ensure that the new treatments are optimized and can become better tailored to a patient's particular type of tumour.

Increasingly, researchers are using a combination of family history information, clinical data, laboratory tests and gene profiling to achieve more highly targeted medicines for patients.

Clinical trials at the Christie are funded by charities such as Cancer Research UK, biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies, health authorities and the Medical Research Council.

It can take 5-10 years for a new treatment to make it through all the stages of development and to become widely available.

With the opening of the new unit The Christie will be able to offer over 200 clinical trials at any one time and will be able to provide a trial option to more of its patients. The expectation is that by 2014 over 2,400 patients a year will enter clinical trials at The Christie.

Last year the centre opened over 75 new early phase (Phase I and 2) trials and recruited over 1000 patients to these novel studies.

10 new phase I and phase 2 trials will start at the Christie over the next few months. These 10 new trials will be for the following cancers: gynaecology (eg: cervical, ovarian), breast, gastro-intestinal (eg: bowel, stomach), genito-urinary (eg: bladder, kidney), lymphoma, haematology (leukaemia & lymphoma), lung, sarcoma (soft tissue) and melanoma (skin) as well as several new biological and experimental pharmacology studies that involve a wider range of cancer patients.

The chemotherapy section of the new patient treatment centre will also be participating in around 30 national and international phase 3 trials.