



Refractory Diseases Need a Good Cure

In the last 30 years, our Foundation has been providing an array of services in caring for the physical, psychological and social well-being of child cancer patients and their families. Helping doctors improve the survival rate of children with cancer is also one of our key missions. We sponsor new drugs for child cancer patients in the five major public hospitals and also support childhood cancer research projects conducted by the two university hospitals and the related medical field in Hong Kong.



Drug Sponsorship:

~HK\$2 million a year



Research Projects (since 1997):

Total Projects: 43

Total Amount:

> HK\$44 million

Dr Alan Chiang, Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, LKS Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong shares with us the application and development of drugs in treating childhood cancer.

Rituximab has been used for treating high risk B-cell lymphomas in adults for over 20 years. Currently, for those who cannot afford this drug can apply for subsidy under the "Safety Net"* of the Hospital Authority Drug Formulary (HADF). Children with high risk B-cell lymphomas are also eligible to use this drug, but are restricted to relapsed cases only.

In 2015, the Hong Kong Paediatric Haematology & Oncology Study Group joined an international clinical trial on *testing the efficacy of adding rituximab to standard chemotherapy for high risk B-cell lymphoma patients*. Introduced from Europe by Dr Chiang, the project compares standard chemotherapy with and without rituximab, hoping that the new protocol would increase the survival rate of children and adolescents with high risk B-cell lymphoma by at least 10%.





As the only research centre in Asia, Hong Kong recruited eight eligible patients into the clinical trial between 2015 and 2017. The interim analysis finds that the new protocol with rituximab is indeed more effective than standard chemotherapy alone. Once the recruitment of the subjects has been completed, the provision of rituximab through the clinical trial has stopped. Since there will be around five paediatric patients diagnosed with high risk B-cell NHL or B-AL in Hong Kong every year, the doctors hope that these patients will continue to receive rituximab as part of their standard treatment regimen.

With the mission of helping doctors to improve the survival rates of children with cancers, CCF has undertaken to pay for the cost of rituximab for a period of three years from 2018 to 2021 so that patients, whose families have financial hardship, can continue to receive this drug as part of the new effective treatment regimen.

* Drugs which are proven to be of significant clinical benefits but are very expensive for HA to provide as part of its standard services are not covered by the standard fees and charges in public hospitals and clinics. Patients who require these drugs and can afford the costs have to purchase the drugs at their own expense. However, HA provides a safety net through the Samaritan Fund and the Community Care Fund Medical Assistance Programme to subsidise the drug expenses of patients who have financial difficulties.



We receive drug sponsorship applications from the paediatric oncologists every year with the hope that they could use the new drugs excluded from the HADF to cure or relieve symptoms of the child

cancer patients. Our approval panel consists of paediatric oncologists in the five public hospitals and the medical adviser of CCF. The medical social workers in the hospitals carried out rigorous financial assessments on a case-by-case basis in order to help families in dire need.

Over the years, we are greatly thankful to the doctors for their relentless efforts in conducting research projects to advance discovery and care of childhood cancer. We would also like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to all our donors in supporting CCF without which we could not have been able to support so many cutting-edge research projects, all of which are driving us towards a cure of childhood cancer.

