

Breakthrough study on child leukaemia

TIM BUGLER

CHILDHOOD leukaemia is distinct from the adult form of the disease, according to new research by Scottish scientists.

Researchers at Glasgow University have identified and modelled a distinct biology for paediatric acute myeloid leukaemia, one of the major causes of death in children.

The “breakthrough” research, from the University’s Institute of Cancer Sciences, is said to significantly advance understanding of the disease and provides potential for developing specific treatment strategies for the childhood cancer, which is currently treated with therapies developed for adults.

Acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) is one of the

most aggressive types of blood cancer that affects children and adults and has the worst survival rates of all the leukaemias.

Dr Karen Keeshan, from the research centre, said: “Our findings are important because we have identified and modelled a distinct biology for paediatric AML. We show that, in fact, the disease in children is distinct from the disease in adults.

“Historically children with AML have received treatment based on adult practice.

“Our work has identified a distinct paediatric gene profile and paediatric gene targets; and by identifying targetable features of the disease in children, we can pursue new and better strategies to treat paediatric AML.”

