

# Breakthrough brings new leukaemia hope

BY KIRSTEEN PATERSON

A DEADLY childhood cancer is not the same as its adult form, tests have revealed.

Around 3100 people were diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) in the UK in 2015.

The rare blood cancer is amongst the most aggressive forms of the disease, with the worst survival rate of all leukaemia variants.

Now it is hoped that more young patients will beat AML thanks to a lab breakthrough.



**Karen Keeshan said better treatments for children are needed**

Current treatments for children with AML are based on those used on adults.

But findings by Glasgow University's Institute of Cancer Sciences shows AML is different in young and old cells, proving "better treatments" are now needed.

Dr Karen Keeshan said: "We have identified and modelled a distinct biology for paediatric AML.

"Historically, children with AML have received treatment based on adult practice and we need better treatments specifically for children

Ref: THENAT20181212518



with AML. Our work has identified a distinct paediatric gene profile and paediatric gene targets.

“By identifying targetable features of the disease in children, we can pursue new and better strategies to treat paediatric AML.”

Paediatrics expert Brenda Gibson, consultant at Glasgow’s Royal Hospital for Children, said: “Despite giving children with AML the most intensive chemotherapy, a third of children still relapse and when children with AML relapse it is often fatal. In addition to a significant relapse rate,

chemotherapy comes with a mortality rate from the treatment alone and also carries the risk of serious side effects which may affect children for the rest of their life.

“By identifying differences in the biology of child and adult AML we can hopefully identify targeted treatments that may not just improve outcomes, but importantly may be associated with fewer side effects than intensive chemotherapy, and as a result the survivors may have a better quality of life, which is very important for children with AML.”



Child survivors may have a better quality of life

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