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Cancer Trials saves Government €6.5m annuallyⁱ

International Clinical Trials Day - Cancer Trials Ireland launches 'Just Ask'

(Dublin, Thursday 19 May 2016): An independent report commissioned by Cancer Trials Ireland (formerly ICORG) estimates that the €3.63m funding from the Exchequer, and other grants, allocated to cancer trials in 2016 will save the HSE at least €6.5m in cancer drugs costⁱ, generate almost €6m in tax revenues,ⁱ contribute €16.5m to Ireland's GDPⁱ and support over 230 jobs, mostly high quality specialist positions. In addition, Cancer Trials Ireland is expected to generate more than €3.85m from international sources.

These findings were announced today to mark International Clinical Trials Day (20th May) and the roll out of 'Just Ask', a new campaign developed by Cancer Trials Ireland to encourage people diagnosed with cancer to just ask their doctor or healthcare professional about cancer trials.

Based on a small sample of case studies, the report, prepared by DKM Economic Consultants, estimates that cancer trials can add 6 to 15 quality adjusted years of life (QALYs) collectively for trial participants with a related economic benefit ranging from €0.28m to €0.65m per trial.ⁱ The report notes that subsequent benefits would be a multiple of these values when proven therapies are made available to patients generally.ⁱ These benefits are in addition to the early access to drugs and treatments and the extra care cancer trials participants receive.

A case study contained in the report demonstrated that in the breast cancer trial known as Tailor X, 110 Irish patients collectively avoided 27 years of chemotherapy which generated a saving of €0.766m for the HSE in avoided treatment costs.ⁱ The test that resulted from this trial means that each year hundreds of patients do not have to undergo chemotherapy which saves the HSE over €0.5m annually.ⁱ Another cancer trial in the area of advanced melanoma added a combined 6.3 quality years of life to the 27 participants which generated an economic benefit of over €0.28m.ⁱ

Speaking at the launch of International Clinical Trials Day, Eibhlin Mulroe, CEO, Cancer Trials Ireland, said, "This report highlights the impact our very well developed network of 14 Cancer Trials Units is having. They give patients early access to medicines not yet available. They can contribute significantly to their wellbeing all the while finding answers to cancer. They also represent a highly effective and efficient one stop shop network for investigator led studies and attracts cancer trials from around the world and from leading pharmaceutical companies."

The report showed that to date, Cancer Trials Ireland has opened over 350 cancer trials involving more than 15,000 cancer patients.ⁱ During 2015, 14 hospitals which have Cancer Trials Units were working on 154 cancer trials involving 6700 patients; 66 were actively recruiting patients while a further 88 were in the follow up stage.ⁱ

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Professor Bryan Hennessy, Clinical Lead for Cancer Trials Ireland and Consultant Oncologist, Beaumont Hospital, said, “Cancer Trials Ireland’s network offers a world class infrastructure. Our key objective is to build on this and increase the number of patients on cancer drug trials from the current 3% to 5% of all patients. We want to initiate and support more investigator led studies, work with pharmaceutical companies and broaden our impact across more cancer types. This growth will further bolster the huge reservoir of scientific knowledge and expertise that we have built over the past 20 years and ensure that people living with cancer continue to access the latest medicines not yet widely available.”

The report also notes that Cancer Trials Ireland’s success with international collaborations helps the IDA build and broaden linkages with its existing clients and opens up opportunities for discussions with new clients interested in cancer. “These deepened relationships and positive perceptions of Ireland as an innovative location have the potential to increase our chances of winning high-value foreign direct investment in the biopharma space, especially as innovation in oncology is moving at such a fast pace,” Barry Heavey, Global Head of Life Sciences, Engineering & Industrial Tech at IDA.

Currently, one in three people will be diagnosed with cancer during their lifetime in Irelandⁱⁱ and according to the National Cancer Registry Ireland, there are just over 20,000 cancer diagnoses each year.ⁱⁱⁱ However, the Strategy for Cancer Control in Ireland notes that cancer incidence is projected to double by 2040.^{iv}

To find out more about cancer trials in Ireland, visit www.cancertrials.ie. If you are living with a cancer diagnosis, just ask your doctor or healthcare professional about cancer trials that may be suitable for you to join.

Cancer Trials Ireland is supported by the Health Research Board and the Irish Cancer Society.

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About Cancer Trials Ireland (formerly ICORG)

- Since it was established in 1996, more than 15,000 patients have participated in more than 350 Cancer Trials Ireland cancer trials.
- 88% of patients who are participating in cancer trials are participating in Cancer Trials Ireland’s trials.
- 98% of all cancer treating specialists in Ireland are members of Cancer Trials Ireland.
- During 2015, 14 hospital based cancer trials units around the country were working on 154 trials involving 6312 patients; 66 were recruiting patients and 88 were in the follow up stage.
- Of these 154 trials, there were 123 cancer trials involved drugs and/or treatments, 29 translational trials which involved analysing tissue and/or blood samples and 2 involved questionnaires and or surveys.
- 35% of these trials involved collaboration with cancer research groups around world and 37% involved working with industry groups such as international pharmaceutical companies.

ⁱ Health & Economic Impacts of Cancer Trials in Ireland commissioned by Cancer Trials Ireland. Prepared by DKM Economic Consultants

ⁱⁱ <http://www.cancer.ie/about-us/media-centre/cancer-statistics> - last accessed on 17th May 2016

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.ncri.ie/sites/ncri/files/factsheets/FACTSHEET_all%20cancers_0.pdf – last accessed on 17th May 2016

^{iv} http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/cancer/pubs/reports/A_strategy_for_cancer_control_in_Ireland.pdf - last accessed on 17th May 2016