



Abbie's Fund

PO Box 355
Leatherhead
Surrey
KT22 2EA
UK

Registered charity no. 1119273

www.abbiesfund.com

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Abbie's Fund – “Make my childhood cancer survivable”

One of Abbie's Funds key objectives is to raise funds to support research into making Neuroblastoma survivable.

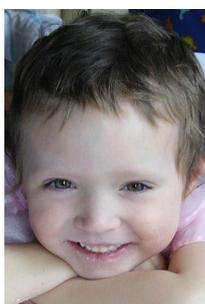
Whilst Neuroblastoma is a relatively rare childhood cancer it is also one of the most aggressive resulting in very poor long term survival. Neuroblastoma is hard to treat successfully for many reasons but three of the key factors are:-

- Detection - techniques are relatively primitive making the presence of the disease hard to detect especially at low, (but still lethal), levels.
- Minimal residual disease – the presence of just a few rogue cancer cells can be enough to ultimately cause a terminal relapse. The limited detection techniques make it impossible to determine whether small numbers of cancerous cells are still present post treatment. Drugs targeted at 'mopping up' residual disease themselves have unpleasant side effects and therefore can only be used for a limited period of time. There is currently no 'daily pill to pop' with minimal side effects that can deal with these rogue cells to make Neuroblastoma liveable with in the longer term.
- Multi-drug resistance – over time the cancer cells evolve into ones more resistant to the treatments and therefore the ability of chemotherapy and other drugs to eradicate these cells diminishes over time.

The combined effect of these three factors is that children often end up in 'perceived remission' but with a undetectable time-bomb of the most aggressive and drug-resistant cancer cells still present within their bodies. This leads to the sad but inevitable relapse and virtually guaranteed death.

Abbie's Fund is therefore looking to fund projects specifically relating to these three key issues. We are realistic enough to recognise the enormity of the task ahead and therefore have set 'survivability' as our goal rather than 'cure'.

Whilst Neuroblastoma is newly diagnosed in only 80 children a year in the UK, the aggressiveness of the disease and the difficulty to treat it successfully means that any research would also inevitably lead to a better understanding and ability to treat more common and less aggressive cancers. If we can conquer a hard cancer like Neuroblastoma then cures for many others should fall into place.



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