# annual report 2020 a time for research

**CRIS Cancer Foundation** 

cancer foundation

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# Letter from the Chair

#### **CRIS stands for "Cancer Research Innovation**

**in Science".** For 10 years, we've been investing in pioneering research into cancer. In that time, our objective has been to support scientists and clinicians to save lives.

The Covid-19 pandemic has derailed the detection and treatment of cancer. Fewer referrals, disruption to treatment and the pausing of screening programmes mean many more people are tragically dying of cancer.

#### Investing in science is an investment in all our futures. The pandemic has taught us that when we work together, positive progress is made.

CRIS Cancer Foundation is an international community. We support the brightest research minds across Europe, who are working tirelessly on new treatments to help us survive and live longer.

Research is the reason I'm alive today. I took part in a clinical trial for multiple myeloma which saved my life. Now it is a regular treatment, giving hope to cancer patients and allowing them to live their lives. We must invest in research so more adults and children with cancer get a second chance like me.

Cancer hasn't stopped during the pandemic, but neither has the CRIS community. Thanks to the dedication and generosity of our supporters, we increased our annual investment in research by 15% in 2020. This has allowed us to continue focusing on the areas of research that have fewer resources but immense potential. We've also been able to invest in scientists at a time when it's been challenging for them to secure funding for their work. We added two new CRIS Units, invested in new research projects in pancreatic cancer and multiple myeloma and also supported young researchers through fellowships and grants.

# I'm incredibly proud that our charity responded with solidarity to the researchers and scientists

during the pandemic. While maintaining our commitment to cancer research, we've funded several international Covid-19 trials. We've been able to fund three extraordinary projects to help reduce the devastating impact of the pandemic. These include using our knowledge to create novel treatments for cancer patients with Covid-19. Working together with Microsoft and Adaptive Biotechnologies, our researchers have shared their expertise to help tackle the virus. In 2021 we will invest in projects that create new cancer therapies which have the potential to reach patients sooner and improve their quality of life. We'll also be introducing more grants and fellowships for scientists and researchers, so they have the stability they need to carry out their vital work.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us in the last year. From our volunteers who keep our charity running, to our supporters whose generous donations allow us to invest in research projects worldwide.

**Cancer patients don't have time to wait.** Together we all have a part to play in supporting innovative cancer research. We need everyone to act now because peoples' lives depend on it.

#### Lola Manterola

CRIS Cancer Foundation Chair and Co-founder.



Cancer hasn't stopped during the pandemic, but neither has the CRIS community. Thanks to the dedication and generosity of our supporters, we increased our annual investment in research by 15% in 2020.



#### What we do

We're an international charity that funds research into pioneering new cancer treatments to increase survival rates and improve quality of life.

Cancer is one of the leading causes of death in the world. Yet many lives could be saved if scientists had the resources they need to carry out research into pioneering new treatments. We give scientists in the UK, Spain and France the support and funds to accelerate the discovery of cancer treatments for adults and children.

By stepping in where there are gaps in funding and collaborating worldwide, we're supporting research scientists to speed up innovative therapies – bringing hope to thousands of cancer patients.

Over the last 10 years, we've given £18 million to research bodies such as the Institute of Cancer Research, so they can carry out vital research into cancer treatments. We've pledged to invest another £48 million over the next five years to save more lives.

Our cancer facilities in public hospitals and other centres around the world are giving more patients the chance to access new treatments. Teams of doctors, researchers, nurses and immunologists work together in CRIS units to treat cancers such as brain tumours in children, ovarian cancer and prostate cancer.

Our grants and fellowships give scientists the funding and support they need to carry out scientific research into cancer treatments.

We're determined that one day every type of cancer will have a treatment. By funding and supporting cancer research, we will save lives.

## Our mission

To invest in cutting-edge research that provides treatments for people with cancer.

## Our vision

A world where pioneering research gives every adult and child with cancer the best chance of survival.

## **Our** values

- > We are passionate and ambitious about making our vision a reality.
- We make long-term commitments to scientists so they can carry out innovative research into cancer treatments.
- > We promote excellence in cancer research as we know this will lead to pioneering new treatments for people with cancer.
- We collaborate with international institutions, research scientists, clinicians, people with a cancer diagnosis, volunteers and donors.
- > We inspire everybody to take action. We all have a role to play regardless of our background, experience or situation.

# **CRIS International**

## Why we work worldwide

We support scientists around the world to pioneer new cancer treatments. By working together, we can accelerate scientific advances in cancer research. Sharing expertise and knowledge globally will help people to live longer.

We have offices in the UK, Spain and France and have developed partnerships with research institutions across Europe and further afield.

## Where we work

We work with state-of-the-art research centres and the most reputable scientists to find new treatments for cancer. Explore our map to find out where we're supporting projects.

## What makes CRIS different?

- > CRIS is international. As a small and dynamic charity, we are not restricted by geography when selecting projects to fund. We identify and support excellence globally.
- > Agile and flexible. We can respond quickly wherever the need for support or collaboration arises.
- > Funding charitable activities. With small overheads, most of the money we raise goes directly towards funding cancer research.
- > Funding research at every level. To accelerate research, we fund all types of research projects – no matter the experience of the researcher or the size of the project. This helps to make sure that every viable option to treat cancer is explored.
- > Funding projects with fewer resources. We fund projects that have more difficulty getting funding, such as brain tumours in children.

## Cancer knows no boundaries

Cancer affects us all, regardless of age, socioeconomic status, gender, nationality or geography. The disease is one of the leading causes of death in the world, with one in six people dying of cancer. Yet many of these deaths can be prevented.

For 10 years, we've been working with the international community to end cancer. We're currently funding research projects at the Institute of Cancer Research in London and other research centres across Europe. This is helping scientists to make new medical discoveries that give cancer patients a greater chance of survival.

- 1- ICR/Royal Marsden, London
- 2- Hospital 12 de Octubre, Hospital de la Paz, Hospital Niño Jesús, Hospital Clínico San Carlos, CNIO, Madrid
- **3-** Gustave Roussy Cancer Campus, Paris
- 4- Hospital La Fe, Valencia
- 5- Instituto de Biología Molecular, Málaga
  6- Hospital Sant Joan de Déu, Barcelona / Hospital del Mar, Barcelona (1)/ Hospital Universitario Vall d'Hebrón, Barcelona (1)
- 7- Hospital Universitario, Albacete
- 8- Centro de Investigación del Cáncer, Salamanca
- 9- Hospital Virgen del Rocío, Sevilla
- ICR/Royal Marsden, London (8)
- 11- Alberta Children's Hospital, Calgary (1)
- **12-** UT Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas (1)

 CRIS projects
 Co-funding grants with international institutions
 CRIS research grants

- 13- Vanderbilt Ingram Cancer Center, Nashville (1)
- **14-** Princess Margaret Cancer Center, Toronto (3)
- 15- Mount Sinai School of Medicine, NY (1)
- **16-** Weill Cornell Medicine, NY (2)
- **17-** Columbia University, NY (1)
- **18-** Dana Farber Institute, Boston (5)
- **19-** The Beatson Cancer Center, Glasgow (1)
- 20- University Hospital, Southampton (1)
- 21- Gustave Roussy Cancer Campus, Paris (3)
- 22- Centre Hospitalier, Lyon (1)
- 23- Prostate Cancer Foundation, Santa Monica
- 24- Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation, NY
- 25- Prostate Cancer Foundation Award, University College, London
- 26- Prostate Cancer Foundation Award, Newcastle University, UK
- 27- The Gurdon Institute, University of Cambridge, UK
- 28- Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation, NY University of Geneva, Switzerland

# The difference we have made to cancer patients

We've invested over £18 million to date in research, supporting scientists to develop pioneering new treatments for people living with cancer.

CRIS investment (£)					
CRIS MULTI-DISCIPLINARY UNITS		ADULT CANCERS			
CRIS Immuno-oncology Unit	862,257	Pancreatic cancer	579,594		
CRIS Translational Research Unit in Haematology	3,490,628	Breast and Ovarian cancer	722,100		
CRIS Prostate Cancer Unit	892,097	Thoracic Immuno-oncology Group	704,000		
CRIS Unit New Experimental Therapies	435,000	Multiple Myeloma	186,165		
CRIS Childhood Cancer Unit	3,685,276	Bowel cancer	244,817		
ICR Biology Unit	150,000	Imaging in Immunotherapy	96,917		
PAEDIATRIC RESEARCH PROJECTS		Cell Therapies in Blood Cancers	217,934		
Childhood Brain Tumours (UK)	470,750	OTHER INVESTMENTS			
Childhood Brain Tumours (France)	95,700	Support for Clinical Trials	3,699,785		
Childhood Brain Tumours (Spain)	219,281	International Fellowships, Scholarships and	1077045		
Ewing sarcoma in children	274,050	Grants to researchers	1,037,045		
MLL leukaemia	153,338	Educational Projects and Scientific Dissemination	346,403		
Pain Guide in Children with Cancer	47,589	COVID and cancer	117,129		
TOTAL		£18,727,855			



304 clinical trials

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CRIS currently funds 53 lines of research, with the addition in 2020 of new projects in multiple myeloma, brain tumours and experimental therapies.

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304 clinical trials were carried out and are still in progress, thanks to CRIS funded research projects and the CRIS units, which are focused on improving treatments for patients.

39

250





53 Lines of research funded



114

Researchers and

scholarships

financed

years





95 Doctoral thesis focusing on **CRIS** projects





28 Projects, Units and **CRIS** Programmes





24 New treatments





A CRIS investment leads to further funding opportunities

X3

# Our highlights in 2020

The global Covid-19 crisis has affected funding for scientific research, but we continued to support cancer research throughout 2020. Here are some of the achievements we're most proud of:



The opening of our new CRIS unit. We opened the CRIS Cancer Foundation Biology Unit in the Institute for Cancer Research Centre for Drug Discovery in London. This has brought scientists together to create new treatments and therapeutic approaches.



**3** Extended our partnership with the ICR. We supported the Institute of Cancer Research to carry out research into multiple myeloma, the second most diagnosed blood cancer. The pandemic halted laboratory activities for most of the year. Despite this, the Thoracic Oncology Immunotherapy Group was set up with four team members and started laboratory research.

- Supporting efforts during the pandemic.
- With the support of our donors, we took part in several national and international Covid-19 vaccine trials. Scientists working on vaccines used the facilities at our CRIS units and drew on the experience and skills of our research scientists. We also funded a project that adapted a cell therapy used in childhood cancer treatments to treat patients with Covid-19.



**Researching childhood cancer.** We supported a team at the Institute of Cancer Research, led by Professor Chris Jones, to publish a paper on improved treatments for babies with brain tumours. This is the largest and most comprehensive study of infant gliomas, a tumour that starts in the brain or spinal cord.

We also continued to support projects focused on leukaemia in children and Ewing's Sarcoma, a type of cancer that is common among young children. Research projects looking at child brain tumours were carried out in the Niño Jesús Hospital in Madrid and the Institute Gustave Rosy in Paris. The Hospital de la Paz in Madrid also continued to develop new personalised treatments for children without treatment options.



5 Set up a new unit specialising in experimental therapies. We opened a CRIS unit at the Hospital Clínico San Carlos in Madrid, to identify new cell therapies to treat ovarian cancer and breast cancer.



#### 7 Finding treatments for prostate cancer.

We supported the Biomedical Research Institute of Malaga to continue researching treatments for prostate cancer. An Excellence Fellowship was also awarded to Dr. David Olmos, so he could continue researching treatments for tumours with a poor prognosis. In partnership with the Prostate Cancer Foundation, we awarded fellowships to two promising UK researchers: Dr Francesco Giganti and Dr. Anastasia Catherine Hepburn.

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6 Training researchers and awarding **research fellowships.** Together with the Damon Runyon Foundation and the Prostate Cancer Foundation, we set up two new international scholarship programmes to support research scientists. This gives promising researchers the funding they need to increase their knowledge of cancer biology, so they can develop pioneering new treatments. In 2020, we also recruited new post-doc researchers through our Excellence and Talent CRIS Research Fellowship programmes.



Developing treatments for aggressive tumours. We funded several projects that developed treatments to tackle aggressive forms of cancer. This included a piece of work, led by Dr. Mariano Barbacid, which eliminated two key proteins in tumour development to reduce pancreatic tumours.

# Our work around the world

With your support we're funding a range of cancer research projects across the globe from commonly diagnosed cancers to rare and underfunded types of tumours.



1 in 2 people in the UK will develop cancer

Source: Cancer

Source: World Health Organization

## CRIS projects supporting adults with cancer

#### **Pancreatic cancer**

Principal investigator: Dr. Mariano Barbacid. Centre: CNIO Madrid. **CRIS invested:** £431.000 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £579.594.

Pancreatic cancer has one of the lowest survival rates. This project aims to search for new treatments for advanced pancreatic cancer, based on the results of years of research.

#### **Prostate cancer**

Principal investigator: Dr. David Olmos. Centre: CNIO Madrid. CRIS invested: £215,500 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £892.097.

For men in the UK, prostate cancer is the most common cancer. This project aims to find new ways to diagnose and treat prostate tumours with aggressive alterations in the way cells repair themselves.

#### **Bowel cancer**

Principal investigator: Dr. Clara Montagut. Centre: Hospital del Mar, Barcelona. CRIS invested: £215,500 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £244.817.

Bowel cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the UK and the second biggest cancer killer. This project aims to better understand why bowel cancer is resistant to treatment when it has spread.

#### **Breast cancer**

Principal investigators: Dr. Atanasio Pandiella, Dr. Alberto Ocaña. Centres: CIC Salamanca, University Hospital of Albacete. CRIS invested: £43,100 in 2020.

by 2040

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in the UK with one woman diagnosed every 10 minutes. This research focuses on two types of breast cancer: triple negative breast tumours with a poor prognosis and without specific therapy, and Her2 + breast tumours, which are aggressive and can develop resistance to treatments.

## How we helped Maria

"I am a living example that research saves lives. When the doctor told me I had a tumour in each breast, I was shocked. Knowing that death is getting closer to you is hard to digest. I had many friends that I have lost to this same disease. Before, a cancer diagnosis was a death sentence. Now, thanks to research, many patients survive. Research is crucial; it needs to be a priority for investment."

Maria Eugenia, 47, who is now free of breast cancer.



#### **Ovarian cancer**

Principal investigators: Dr. Atanasio Pandiella, Dr. Alberto Ocaña. Centres: CIC Salamanca, University Hospital of Albacete. CRIS invested: £60,400 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested in Breast and Ovarian cancer: £722,100.

Over 4,000 women in the UK lose their lives each year because of ovarian cancer. This project is finding new immunological therapies for advanced ovarian cancer based on the genetic and protein analysis of tumours.

#### Imaging in Immunotherapy

Principal investigator: Dr. Raguel Pérez López. Centre: Institute of Oncology, Barcelona. CRIS invested: £69,000 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £96,000.

Cancer immunotherapy has meant a radical change in the way we treat many types of cancer. However, despite spectacular results in some patients, immunotherapy has no effect on a significant number of people.

This project integrates the usual imaging techniques in clinical practice with advanced imaging techniques and molecular analysis to obtain more reliable information on which patients will respond to immunotherapy.

Immunotherapy is a type of cancer treatment that boosts the body's natural defences to fight cancer. It uses substances made by the body or in a laboratory to improve how your immune system works to find and destroy cancer cells.





Cell therapies in blood cancers Principal investigator: Dr. Joaquín Martínez. Centre: Hospital 12 de Octubre, Madrid. CRIS invested: £217,934 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £217.934.

Blood cancer is the fifth most common cancer in the UK, with over 40,000 people diagnosed every year. This project works to develop and patent new cell therapies based on the use of natural killer cells which detect and destroy tumour cells. These are modified by genetic engineering with special receptors called chimeric antigen receptors (CAR). This treatment uses cells from your own immune system.

#### Multiple myeloma

Principal investigator: Dr. Charlotte Pawlyn. Centre: Institute of Cancer Research, London. CRIS invested: £40,165 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £186,165.

Myeloma, also known as multiple myeloma, is a blood cancer arising from plasma cells. This study examines why myeloma patients become resistant to some of the most common treatments.

#### Immunotherapy

Principal investigator: Dr. Astero Klampatsa. Centre: Institute of Cancer Research, London. CRIS invested: £309,000 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £704,000.

This study is developing new strategies for using CAR therapies to treat solid tumours, with a focus on mesothelioma. Mesotheliomas are aggressive thoracic tumours, a type of cancer located in the organs, glands or chest. They have only a 10 to 20% survival at five years. Childhood cancers are the leading cause of death for children in the developed world. Yet, this is an area of research that is sadly underfunded by statutory bodies and therefore relies on support from charities such as CRIS. Our aim is to invest in research to determine the causes and find cures and improved treatments for children with cancer.

Brain tumours are the most common types of tumours that develop in children, with around 400 children affected each year in the UK. For some types of brain tumours, there are no treatments.

#### **Brain tumours**

Principal investigator: Dr. Álvaro Lassaletta. Centre: Niño Jesús Children's University Hospital in Madrid, Spain. CRIS invested: £49,200 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £219,281.

Scientists are developing a clinical trial for a treatment that uses oncolytic viruses to kill tumour cells in paediatric, adolescent and young adult patients.

#### Brain cancer glioma

Principal investigator: Dr. Chris Jones. Centre: The Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) in London, UK. CRIS invested: £110,000 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £470,750.

This genetic study looks at the different types of childhood brain tumours to determine what type of tumour each child has and how aggressive it is at the point of diagnosis. This means an appropriate therapy can be selected at an early stage.

#### Brain tumours, Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG)

Principal investigator: Dr. Jacques Grill. Centre: Gustave Roussy Institute in Paris, France. CRIS invested: £43,100 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £95,700.

Diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma is an aggressive, fast-growing form of brain cancer and is the leading cause of brain tumour deaths in children. This project identifies the mutations that trigger metastases, when a cancer spreads, and looks at how to prevent them.

#### MLL leukaemia

Principal investigator: Dr. Mireia Camós. Centre: Sant Joan de Déu Hospital in Barcelona, Spain.

CRIS invested: £26,000 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £153,338.



Leukaemia is the most common cancer in children under 15. Over 650 children and young adults are diagnosed with leukaemia every year in the UK. The aim is to develop new diagnostic, follow-up and treatment strategies for aggressive leukaemia in babies, through the genetic analysis of the tumours.

#### Ewing sarcoma in children

Principal investigator: Dr. Enrique de Álava Casado, Dr. Rosa Noguera. Centres: Virgen del Rocío Hospital in Seville and University of Valencia in Spain. CRIS invested: £34,500 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £271,700.

Ewing sarcoma is a type of bone cancer that mainly affects the legs, pelvis, arms and ribs. It is a group of four different types of cancer, known collectively as the Ewing family of tumours. Ewing sarcoma of the bone is the most common of these.

This project looks at the characteristics of the elements that surround tumour cells to find new targets to combat metastasis in patients with childhood sarcomas.

#### How we helped Danny

Stories of hope come about because of the generosity of our supporters. By helping us to fund new research, we will save many more lives. We want to share with you a moving letter that our founders, Diego and Lola, received.

Dear Mr. Megia and Mrs. Manterola,

Last June, our son Danny, 8 years old, was diagnosed with a burkitt lymphoma. This started a period of the most difficult days of our lives, as you can imagine. Luckily for us, having come through battle after battle, we have won the war, although with deep scars that will stay with us for the rest of our lives.

However, our son does not remember his illness as something traumatic. When he entered the CRIS Unit at La Paz Hospital for the first time his words were: "Mummy, what a beautiful hotel!". He kept this positive attitude right through for the nearly three months that he was in his hospital room. As parents, we have always taught our children that our goal in life was to make them worthy members of society. What you both have taught us by your example is that we are the ones that must become worthy members.

Right from the start, we told our son that even in every bad experience in life there is always something positive to find, even if it is from a disease as cruel as cancer. Discovering that the world is a wonderful place, full of people like you working relentlessly to help others is one of the best things that we have learnt through this journey. That is why we would support you in every possible way. You have us at your disposal whenever you need us to contribute to CRIS.

Thank you for allowing us to help make this world a better one.

Best regards,

Jose Luis and Conchi

## How we helped Juanfran

"I was diagnosed with leukaemia when I was 17. I had relapsed, went through a bone marrow transplant and before turning 18, I was sick again. I was sent to CRIS Unit of Advanced Therapies at La Paz Hospital and I met Dr. Antonio Perez Martinez, who is unbelievably committed to each one of his patients. Thanks to him and a very innovative treatment with CAR-T cells, I am alive.

After three months I could compete in cycling again. If I was able to survive cancer, we can surely beat this disease."

Juanfran, age 19, who is now training to become a nurse.





# **CRIS** cancer units

CRIS units are state-of-the-art facilities in hospitals and research centres around the world. They combine laboratory research and clinical trials so more people with cancer have the chance to access new treatments. Teams of experts from diverse fields work together to treat a range of cancers. These include doctors, nurses, research scientists and technicians.

## CRIS cancer units adult cancer

#### **CRIS Research Unit Translational in** Haematology

Principal investigator: Dr. Joaquín Martínez. Centre: Hospital 12 de Octubre de Madrid. **CRIS invested**: £491,600 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £3,490,628.

This unit specialises in using cell therapies to treat leukaemia, lymphomas and myelomas. It combines clinical research and laboratory research to reduce the time between scientific advances and their clinical use, especially in patients without other treatment options.

The unit has developed 15 new drugs which have gone through clinical trials.

Over 40,000 annual cases of haematological tumours are detected each year. They can be largely controlled but relapses do frequently occur. So, survival is still around 70%.



# → Dr. Joaquín Martínez

As well as clinical trials, we have participated in the development of 15 different drugs thanks to support from CRIS."





#### **Prostate Cancer CRIS Unit**

Principal investigators: Dr. Elena Castro, Dr. David Olmos. Centres: IBIMA Málaga, CNIO Madrid. **CRIS invested**: £100,000 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £892.097.

This unit develops new methods for the diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer in its most aggressive forms, using advanced techniques to study genetics.



→ Dr. David Olmos 'Support from CRIS has been crucial. Without it, it wouldn't have been possible to develop this research."

#### Immuno-oncology Unit

Principal investigators: Dr. Luis Paz-Ares, Dr. Luis Álvarez Vallina. **Centre:** Hospital 12 de Octubre de Madrid. **CRIS invested:** £284,600 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £862.257.

Immunotherapy can be used to treat types of cancer in advanced stages that have very few effective therapies. These include lung cancer, leukaemia, melanoma, bladder cancer, breast cancer and many others in its advanced stages.

This unit develops immunological therapies for haematological tumours through the latest advances in immunotherapy and genetic engineering. The goal is to develop new therapies, understand and improve existing ones, and develop clinical trials.



#### → Dr. Luis Paz-Ares

'Funding from CRIS has been essential in helping us classify tumours and to create new treatments."



## → Dr. Luis Álvarez Vallina

Thanks to CRIS Cancer Foundation, we have developed a pioneering new treatment for patients."

CRIS research units childhood cancer

#### **CRIS Advanced Therapies Unit in Childhood Cancer**

Principal investigator: Dr. Antonio Pérez Martínez. **Centre:** Hospital Universitario de la Paz de Madrid. CRIS invested: £482,950 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £3,685,276.

This unit has a team with a diverse range of expertise who work on cutting-edge research, clinical trials and the most advanced therapies. The research in this unit aims to develop innovative therapies through clinical trials for children with no alternative treatment.

#### → Dr. Antonio Pérez Martínez



Thanks to CRIS, we have a multidisciplinary team, and our objective is not only to cure our patients, but to give them a better quality of life."

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#### **CRIS Unit New Experimental Therapies**

Principal investigator: Dr. Alberto Ocaña. Centre: Hospital Clínico San Carlos, Madrid. **CRIS invested**: £215,600 in 2020. Total amount CRIS has invested so far: £435,000.

In this unit, high performance techniques are used to systematically study new drugs and new tumour targets, identify new treatments and combat resistance. Some of the most important projects in this unit focus on breast and ovarian cancer.





"CRIS has been fundamental in the fight against cancer along with their supporters even as resources for researchers are hard to come by."

## **Childhood cancer** survival rates

Little is known about the causes of most childhood cancer, but the past few decades have seen dramatic improvements in the outlook for children diagnosed with cancer.

# **CRIS** clinical studies

We support prestigious researchers to develop new treatments for cancer that are tested in clinical trials. With funding, research centres can pioneer new, innovative drug treatment.

#### **CLINICAL STUDIES:**

#### Breast cancer:

BR-007: This study focuses on hormonepositive breast cancer patients who become resistant to hormonal treatments. It assesses the safety of a treatment designed to tackle resistant tumour cells.

Principal investigators: Dr. Miguel Quintela and Dr. Ramón Colomer.

**BR-008:** This clinical trial is testing an immunotherapy aimed at reactivating the cells of the immune system which are responsible for rejecting breast tumours. Principal investigators: Dr. Miguel Quintela and Dr. Ramón Colomer.

**BR-009.** This trial is testing the safety of a therapy to treat the metabolism of tumour cells that develop resistance. Principal investigator: Dr. Miguel Quintela.

**Rogabreast:** This study assesses the safety of a triple treatment for hormone positive breast cancer.

Principal investigators: Dr. Miguel Quintela, Dr. Ramón Colomer and Dr. Luis Manso.

#### Bowel cancer:

**Dermia:** This is a test to control the side effects on the skin of a drug used to treat bowel tumours Principal investigator: Dr. Patricia Ramírez.

#### **Bladder cancer:**

**Dutreneo:** To evaluate whether the prospects of patients who have bladder cancer can be improved by applying immunotherapy before operating on them.

Principal investigator: Dr. Enrique Grande.

Nicaragua: This study evaluates the safety and efficacy of a new drug combination in patients with bladder cancer who do not respond to other therapies.

Principal investigators: Dr. Albert Font and Dr. Daniel Castellano.

**CCTG BL.13:** Checks the effectiveness of using the immunotherapy drug durvalumab after initial treatments, including chemotherapy, surgery or radiotherapy, for invasive bladder cancer. Principal Investigator: Ignacio Durán.

#### Myeloid leukemia:

**ResToP:** This trial studies the therapeutic value of a new treatment regimen for patients with chronic myeloid leukemia. Principal investigators: Dr. Valentín García Gutiérrez and Dr. Juan Carlos Hernández Boluda.

Lymphoma:

MDA-BTG-2020-01 Voraxaze: This trial evaluates the effectiveness of a drug in decreasing the toxicity of methotrexate when used to treat lymphomas. Principal investigator: Dr. Adolfo de la Fuente.

Dr. Joaquín Martínez, CRIS Unit Director at 12 de Octubre hospital in Madrid

#### **OBSERVATIONAL STUDIES:**

#### Prostate cancer:

**PROREPAIR SEQ:** A study examining the relationship between some aggressive forms of prostate cancer and certain mutations that occur in genes related to DNA repair. Principal investigators: Dr. David Olmos and Dr. Elena Castro.

#### Immune thrombocytopenia:

FCR-PTI-2017-01: This is an observational study of abnormalities in cell morphology in patients with immune thrombocytopenia that may have myelodysplastic syndrome. Principal investigator: Dr. Tomás González.

**REVOGEN:** This treatment will try to understand the relationship between certain genetic variations and resistance to a treatment used for immune thrombocytopenia (eltrombopag).

Principal investigator: Dr. Tomás González.

#### **TRANSLATIONAL STUDIES:**

#### Paediatric brain cancer:

Eusapharma: This study looks at the development of a promising combination of next-generation cell therapies and antibodies to combat tumours of the central nervous system.

Principal investigator: Dr. Antonio Pérez.









Dr. Enrique Grande, Hospital MD Anderson's Director of Oncology and Bowel Cancer research.

"I can never thank CRIS enough for the support they have given me to develop this research, which will help to better understand bladder cancer."



Dr. Elena Castro, Prostate cancer CRIS Unit Director and IBIMA researcher.

Dr. Antonio Perez, CRIS Unit Director at La Paz hospital in Madrid for Paediatric Cancer.



# Interview with **Professor Chris Jones**

# Understanding childhood brain tumours

Professor Chris Jones heads the Glioma Team at the What do you hope this work will lead to? Institute of Cancer Research (ICR). With our support, the team's research aims to find the genes which cause childhood brain tumours to develop.

Here. Professor Chris Jones talks to us about their findings.

#### Why do you have an interest in childhood brain tumours?

When I started in this field, childhood brain tumours were woefully under studied and many types had terrible clinical outcomes. We set up a brand new lab at the ICR 16 years ago to carry out innovative research. We started building up from nothing to where we are today.

#### What does your work involve?

We carry out innovative molecular analysis using cutting-edge technologies to identify different mutations in childhood brain tumours. The funding from CRIS has helped us to define and classify the different types of high-grade glioma brain tumours. Once we'd established that there is more than one disease, we started delving deeper into the different characteristics of each type. Eventually we'll understand how they develop, and then create new treatments.

#### What have you found so far?

We've conducted a large study of a thousand tumours which has helped us define the subgroups of highgrade glioma. Now we're focusing on a couple of these subtypes to understand them more. We've been using new technologies to look at the tumour at a single cell level. We can disentangle a tumour down to individual cells and see what's going on, the different biology and how the cells interact.

We hope to identify the biological drivers of all the different subgroups of tumours and develop therapies. Previously all children with brain tumours would be grouped into the same clinical trial. Now, we'll be able to design trials to address the differences and develop new biology-driven therapies.

#### What do you hope this work will lead to?

We hope to identify the biological drivers of all the different subgroups of tumours and develop therapies. Previously all children with brain tumours would be grouped into the same clinical trial. Now, we'll be able to design trials to address the differences and develop new biology-driven therapies.

#### Why is the support of the charity been so important?

Even a few years ago we wouldn't have imagined that we would be able to analyse a single cell. It was unattainable for most labs because of the cost. Now we can use these techniques.

The support of CRIS is fundamental. We work in a complicated area where it's not just one disease but 10 or 12. We really need the funding to tackle as many of the subtypes as quickly as possible and in the most cutting-edge way.

#### Why should CRIS supporters get behind work like yours?

For decades, there haven't been any new treatments that have helped children with brain tumours as it's an underfunded area. It's only through research that we're going to change this.

We are making great progress. But we need support to take our research further. This will help to turn that biological understanding into new treatments and clinical trials. For some kids they had no hope up until now. I think there is a glimmer of hope, but we need support to get there.



Lucía Fernández Casanova, CRIS scholarship researcher at St Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, USA - a world-leading research hospital for childhood cancer.

# **Our fellowship** programmes

We aim to promote the importance of cancer research in finding effective treatments and support scientists to carry out their work. Knowledge of cancer is constantly evolving so keeping up to date is essential. That's why it's important to lay the foundations for solid research careers that offer stability and attract the best and brightest researchers.

Our fellowship programmes support researchers of the future by giving them training and mentoring opportunities, professional development, and knowledge of new trends and techniques. This helps them to remain at the cutting edge of research.

Our fellowship programme:

- promotes cancer research projects carried out by outstanding physicians and researchers
- makes sure researchers have the support they need to develop their independence and creativity
- supports professionals to carry out pioneering research
- · allows researchers to transform their hospitals and research institutions into world-leading centres for cancer research
- provides financial support and incentives to stabilise careers in cancer research.

# **Our International Scientific Committee**

We want to make sure only the most innovative, creative and exciting research is funded. Our International Scientific Committee, made up of eminent cancer specialists, selects which research projects we fund. The committee members give up their time voluntarily to assess, review and judge the fellowship applications we receive each year. Evaluation by our committee guarantees that we are funding scientific researchers who excel in their field.

The international committee is made up of:

- Prof. Paul Workman, ICR Executive and President (UK) Committee Chair.
- Prof. Veronika Sexl, University of Veterinary Medicine of Vienna (AT) and Vice-Chair
- Prof. Rajesh Chopra, Apple Tree Partners VC (UK)
- Prof. Paul S Mischel, Standford University -Stanford (US)
- Prof. Lillian Siu, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre (CA)
- Prof. Trey Westbrook, Baylor College of Medicine (US)
- Prof. Fabrice André, Gustave Roussy (FR)
- Dr. Joaquín Martínez, Head CRUHT CNIO-H120 (SP)

# International grants for researchers

We offer financial support to researchers starting off in the profession so they can spend time working at internationally renowned centres in the world. This helps them to gain new knowledge and learn different techniques and approaches. The idea is that when they return home, they will implement this learning in their hospitals and research centres. Researchers can apply for funding to carry out research for a stay of between six months and a year.

# **Research excellence Programmes**

To increase the scope and impact of quality research, we support outstanding researchers with great potential to develop their careers in cancer research. To do this, we set up:

1. The CRIS Research Talent Programme, which aims to support exceptional post-docs and clinical researchers. These professionals have first-hand knowledge and experience of supporting patients alongside working in the laboratory. Participants are asked to come up with research projects to create new cancer therapies. Researchers have an endowment of £340,000 over five years, so £68,000 a year.

2. The CRIS Excellence Programme. This aims to give promising young researchers the knowledge and skills they need to submit project ideas that will create genuine change in cancer therapies. Researchers receive an endowment of £1,063,000 over five years, so £212,600 a year.

# **International fellowships**

To support cancer research globally, we collaborate with international research bodies. In 2020, we set up two research programmes with the Prostate Cancer Foundation in California. We also created two programmes with the Damon Runyon Foundation which is based in New York.

"We are delighted with our union with CRIS. We know that, more than ever, this collaboration is vital investment in international research to advance faster against cancer." Yung Lie, CEO of Damon Runyon Foundation

"Our foundation is delighted to collaborate with CRIS to discover young researchers and accelerate the end of prostate cancer globally." Howard Soule. Scientific Director of the Prostate Cancer Foundation



30 Fellowship programmes



# Acknowledging promising researchers

CRIS co-funds the Young Investigator Award with the Prostate Cancer Foundation



## Winner:

Winner:

Dr. Francesco Giganti Carried out research at the University College London, UK.



#### Dr. Anastasia Catherine Hepburn Carried out research at Newcastle University, UK.

CRIS co-funds Post-Doc Scholarships with the Damon Runyon Foundation

Scholarship 1:



Dr. Iva Tchasovnikarova Carried out research at Massachusetts General Hospital, USA



Scholarship 2: Dr. Ivana Gasic

Carried out research at Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA

# **Fundraising in 2020**

The Covid-19 outbreak has had a devastating financial impact on UK charities. Estimates from the National Council of Voluntary Organisations suggest charities lost at least £4.3 billion in income in the first 12 weeks of the pandemic alone.

A recent article in The Times newspaper shows that medical research charities have lost more than 40% of fundraising income during the pandemic. Event fundraising is a vital source of income for CRIS. So, when the pandemic stopped us from carrying out our planned fundraising activities, we were extremely concerned. Yet, thanks to our incredible supporters, we increased our investment in cancer research by 15% in 2020.

## 2.6 challenge

The 2.6 challenge was a simple and fun way for everyone to do their bit to help charities during the Covid-19 crisis. Virgin Money set up the challenge after the London Marathon – one of the biggest fundraising events in the calendar was cancelled.

Fundraisers were asked to complete an activity based on the numbers 26 or 2.6. The aim was to do this on or around Sunday 26 April, what would've been the date of the London Marathon.

Our incredible supporters raised £16,450 for CRIS by taking on a variety of challenges. Benjamin, age 7, wrote his hopes for the future in 26 words, and Javier Altozano did a DJ session on Instagram Live for 2 hours and 6 minutes. Thanks to everyone that took part. It shows that even a global pandemic can't stop our dedicated supporters.



Beet Cancer Challenge

Research shows that healthy eating and regular exercise help to reduce the risk of a cancer diagnosis. Launched in February 2020, the Beet Cancer Challenge encouraged our supporters to adopt healthy habits by following a guided diet and exercise regime for one month. A huge thank you to everyone who took part and stuck to their diets and exercise at the start of the pandemic.

### Garrett and our 'CRIS'-mas Appeal

CRIS patron Garrett Curran trekked 115 km to the South Pole to raise money to fund research into paediatric brain tumours. Garrett was part of an 11-strong team led by polar explorer Alan Chamers MBE.

The crew – which included ex-marine and fellow explorer Wayne Hoyle and former England rugby captain Lewis Moody – set off from the Union Glacier Basecamp for the 10-day trip on 12 January 2020.

They experienced first-hand the challenges faced by early explorers as they made the incredible journey to the southernmost point on Earth.



One of the most inhospitable regions on the planet, the crew braced extreme weather conditions – including temperatures of -45 degrees and winds up to 35 knots - altitude sickness, blisters and hypothermia.

Garrett says: "Every day was different: some severe with much suffering, some simply beautiful beyond words, most were both.

"Our crew reached our destination safe and sound. On the way, we grew closer in trust and friendship and drew inspiration from our anti-cancer heroes: the children and their families, the doctors, researchers, medical staff and the team at CRIS Cancer."

Garret matched donations made by individuals. These were also matched by donations from companies. So, each individual donation was tripled, raising over an incredible £100,000 in total. We salute Garrett for his bravery and commitment to help children with cancer and their families.



# Hear from the CRIS community

# Meet Ana

#### How did you first hear about CRIS?

I'm originally from Spain, but I moved to London in 2005. I had friends who were volunteering at the charity and they encouraged me to get involved.

#### Why did you want to volunteer?

I've always wanted to do something that makes a difference. I have a passion for finance and felt I could use my skills and experience in a positive way.

#### What role do you have at the charity?

I initially supported the charity by raising money. I made Christmas crafts and sold them at school fairs. I also took part in a 10k run. For the last three years, I've volunteered as a financial controller, overseeing the finances. I look after the accounts, make sure invoices are paid and manage all the donations.

#### Why is the subject of cancer important to you?

Cancer is such a widespread issue and will affect us all either personally or through a family member. So, it's vital we do something about it.

# What would your message be to others thinking about getting involved with the charity?

You can use your skills to help others. I feel like I'm supporting the charity to build a better world for my children and my future grandchildren.



Ana De Paz volunteers as the charity's financial controller. Passionate about the cause, she has an extensive career in finance and a background in professional coaching.



As Managing Director at Bank of America, Snigdha Singh uses skills from her 20-year career in banking to volunteer as a Trustee for the charity.

# Meet Snigdha

#### Why did you want to get involved with the charity?

It was a personal journey for me. Around five years ago, cancer suddenly came very close to home, and I realised first hand the magnitude of these malignancies and how little I actually know about it. I found that helplessness very distressing and really wanted to do more.

#### What impact is the charity making?

With CRIS, it's about making the journey better; we are fully dedicated to facilitating research and ensuring new treatment options are made available to more people. Innovative scientific research is where the charity excels, and we believe it is the only way to treat cancer.

#### What benefits do you get from volunteering your time as a Trustee?

Being a trustee for CRIS is a very rewarding experience. I take great pride in being involved in such an important cause, and really enjoy learning from our scientific teams and being a part of their journeys. This space is constantly evolving, and I believe a world where cancer is not a death sentence could be right around the corner.

#### Where would you like the charity to be in the next five to 10 years?

I think the key is to keep going until we reach the point where cancer survival is a given. I believe we will get to that place where targeted treatment options are mass produced and made easily available to people.

#### What is your message to others thinking of becoming involved with CRIS?

Please do get involved in whatever capacity you can - volunteering, fundraising, donating, collaborating, sharing your time or making an introduction. Don't underestimate the power you have to make a difference. Find a way to be involved that fits into your life, and make a real impact!

# a Time for **RESEARCH**

# The CRIS 2020 virtual gala

Our biggest fundraising event went virtual in 2020, raising over £770,000 to fund vital research into cancer treatments.

Every year, our annual fundraising ball raises an incredible amount of money for cancer research. But with social distancing guidelines in place, a ball with 400 guests in one venue was impossible. So, in 2020, we decided to bring the ball to our guests, using a virtual event platform.

On Saturday 7 November, we held the CRIS 2020 virtual fundraising gala with guests joining from the UK, Europe and North America. The theme for the evening was: "A Time For Research", which highlighted the need to support research into cancer treatments during the pandemic and beyond.







Guests took part in a silent auction and prize draw. Our supporters donated incredible prizes like a stay at an exclusive holiday home and valuable art and sports memorabilia. Guests in London also enjoyed a delicious three-course dinner delivered to their door, which was prepared by London restaurants Hispania and Pizarro.

It was our first virtual event, and we were overwhelmed by the support we received from the CRIS community, including loyal supporters, researchers, doctors and volunteers. We were absolutely thrilled to raise over £770,000 on the night. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsor R.J. O'Brien, all this money will go towards funding research into cancer treatments. We are deeply appreciative of everyone's support.

# Our five-year plan

Research holds the key to treating cancer and increasing survival rates. The dedication and hard work of scientific researchers means more adults and children are surviving cancer and living a better quality of life.

Sadly, the advances that have been made in cancer research have been affected by the pandemic. There's less funding available for scientists to carry out research projects. Many more people are having their cancer diagnosed at a later stage than they would have done, which means they need more advanced treatments.

# Investing in cancer research that benefits patients

Now more than ever, we need to fund pioneering cancer treatments. We plan to invest £48 million in cancer research over the next five years, so researchers can develop new therapies. This will give thousands more cancer patients a chance of a better future.

Not all research projects need millions of pounds in funding. An investment of £80,000 could get a research project off the ground, allowing scientists to develop new treatments for clinical trials. They can then use their research findings to get additional funding to carry out further work.

There's still a lot more to be done. But, together with our supporters, we will give every adult and child with cancer the best chance of survival. CRIS would like to continue its strategy of investing in innovative and collaborative research over the next five years.



Please note, the total amounts are dependent on fundraising income.

# Thank you to our UK corporate funders

CRIS would like to continue its strategy of investing in innovative and collaborative research over the next five years.



# **Our finances**

	Unrestricted
Incoming resources from:	
Donations and legacies	233,124
Other fundraising activities	790,473
Investments	2,156
Total income resources	1,025,753
Expenditure on:	
Fundraising events	93,011
Overheads	40,079
Donations made to research	435,898
Total expenditure	568,987

#### **Ratios**

Overheads/total income Total expenses/income

Every £1 spent in fundraising raises

We are immensely grateful for the support we have had from our committed CRIS community - the individual donors and their families, community fundraisers, corporate partners and our diligent volunteers without whom we would not be able to keep funding pioneering research.

CRIS CANCER FOUNDATION, A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE (CHARITY NO. 1140193) Annual Report and Financial Statements for the period ended 31 December 2020

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

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2020		2019
Restricted	Total	Total
15,000	248,124	180,774
-	790,473	879,798
-	2,156	2,149
15,000	1,040,753	1,062,721
-	93,011	159,542
-	40,079	59,079
15,000	450,898	723,346
15,000	583,987	941,967

2020

2019

4%	6%
13%	21%
£11	£7

## **CRIS** Partners

We work with research institutions and hospitals in the UK, France, Spain and further afield.





# Join the CRIS community

From volunteering to fundraising, there are lots of ways to get involved in our work. Together, we will make sure pioneering cancer research gives every adult and child the best chance of survival.

If you'd like to donate, you can be sure your gift will give hope to people with cancer.

Visit: www.criscancer.org.uk

Tel: 0203 417 3535

Email: info@criscancer.org.uk

Address: Second floor office, 3a Harrington Road, London SW7 3ES

CRIS Cancer Foundation is a registered charity (charity no. 1140193)