



**SAMANTHA DICKSON
BRAIN TUMOUR TRUST**

Brain tumour breakthrough now benefiting patients

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The National Hospital of Neurology and Neurosurgery (NHNN), London, is implementing a molecular brain tumour test to improve diagnosis and treatment thanks to funding from the Samantha Dickson Brain Tumour Trust.

The Hospital, which is part of University College London Hospitals (UCLH), will become the first in the country to routinely offer this test, which investigates the genetic background of the tumour. The results of each test will be used in diagnosis and treatment decisions for the individual, improving their care and outcomes. Meanwhile, the information gained across the initiative will be used to better understand the role and importance of two genetic changes in brain tumours.

Paul Carbury, Chief Executive of the Samantha Dickson Brain Tumour Trust, commented that:

“We are very pleased with this advance in diagnosis, and this is an excellent example of a scientific breakthrough being used for the benefit of people with brain tumours. It is also a good example of how our partnership with UCL and UCL Hospitals to form the first centre of excellence for brain tumour treatment is already starting to pay dividends.”

The ‘MGMT methylation’ test will be performed on tumour samples from all patients at the Hospital with a glioblastoma, one of the most common and aggressive types of brain tumour, and those with certain other serious types of brain tumour. The test detects a chemical change in the DNA that shows how sensitive the cells are to certain chemotherapy drugs. The tumour samples will also in some cases be tested for a ‘1p/19q’ genetic change in the chromosomes that may provide information about tumour type and severity.

At present, only around 1 in 5 people with a glioblastoma live for more than 2 years following their diagnosis. Improving the diagnosis, treatments and outcomes decisions for individuals with this devastating condition is an important goal for the Samantha Dickson Brain Tumour Trust.

Research into brain tumours receives a fraction of the funding of higher profile cancers, but the Samantha Dickson Brain Tumour Trust is working hard to rectify this. The Trust is the biggest brain tumour charity in the UK, and currently spends around £750,000 per year on much-needed research in the area. The Trust was set up in 1996 by Neil and Angela Dickson, whose daughter died from a brain tumour at the age of 16.

The initiative, which has been jointly funded by the Hospital and the Samantha Dickson Brain Tumour Trust, will also build up the infrastructure at the centre in order to provide the test to many external hospitals. This will put the Hospital at the forefront of diagnosis and treatment for brain tumours.

Professor Sebastian Brandner, of the Division of Neuropathology at the National Hospital of Neurology and Neurosurgery, explained:

“We are very grateful for the support we have received from the Samantha Dickson Brain Tumour Trust to conduct this work, which will make our site one of the leading centres in the UK providing such tests on a routine basis to patients with brain tumours. It will also enable us to develop further new tests.”

Notes to Editors

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Samantha Dickson Brain Tumour Trust

The Samantha Dickson Brain Tumour Trust exists to find a cure for childhood and adult brain tumours through funding research and to offer support, hope and information to patients and their carers.

Founded in 1996, the Trust has become the largest brain tumour charity in the UK with the highest level of laboratory-based brain tumour research in the country. The Trust offers support to patients diagnosed with a brain tumour as well as their families and/or carers.

In June 2008 the Samantha Dickson Brain Cancer Unit was opened at University College London. This is the UK's first 'centre of excellence' for this disease. We aim to improve outcomes for brain tumour patients, develop new brain tumour research programmes and aid the development of more skilled specialists in the brain tumour field.