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## Canada reports on national investment in childhood and adolescent cancer research - a worldwide first -

**Tuesday October 20, 2009 (TORONTO)** - The first-ever detailed examination of a country's investment in research on childhood and adolescent cancers was released today by the Canadian Cancer Research Alliance (CCRA) and the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (the Partnership). The study identified the research focused on childhood and adolescent cancers from among 7,203 peer-reviewed cancer research projects funded by governmental and voluntary sector (non-profit, non-government) organizations between 2005 and 2007, and categorized the investment by research areas and types of cancer.

"Cancers affecting children and adolescents are different from the ones found in adults. Research on how these cancers begin and what causes them within this population is key to advancing our understanding of how to prevent or stop the disease in young people," explains Dr. Paul Grundy, Chair of C<sup>17</sup>, which represents all the Canadian childhood cancer and blood disorder centers, Director of Pediatric Hematology Oncology and Palliative Care at Stollery Children's Hospital in Edmonton, and advisor on this report.

"Due to significant developments in treatment, 80% of children will survive at least five years after receiving a cancer diagnosis. This means there are more survivors of childhood cancers living with the long-term effects of their cancer or the treatment they received. Research on how to reduce these adverse effects and help the growing number of survivors and families cope is vital."

For the period studied, research investment focused on understanding the causes of childhood and adolescent cancer, and was proportionately double that observed for cancer overall. Research investment in childhood and adolescent cancer was also proportionately higher in areas focused on patient care and survivorship, and the biology of cancer, particularly how genes help turn normal cells into cancer cells. There was no research investment in cancer prevention interventions directed at children and adolescents, which may reflect that relatively little is known about the causes of cancer in this age group.

From 2005 to 2007, a total of \$38.1M was invested in research on childhood and adolescent cancers. This translated into \$1 of every \$30 invested in peer-reviewed cancer research funded by governmental and voluntary sector organizations during the period. The annual investment rose from \$12.4M in 2005 to \$13.2M in 2007, representing a 6.5% increase. For the same period, the annual research investment for all cancers increased by 10.5% from \$364.3M in 2005 to \$402.4M in 2007.

*Investment in Research on Childhood and Adolescent Cancers, 2005-2007* is a special section of *Cancer Research Investment in Canada, 2007*, an annual survey produced by the CCRA, an alliance of cancer research funding organizations and affiliated partners working together to enhance the overall state of cancer research funding in Canada through improved communication, cooperation and coordination.

"The information provided by the survey is very valuable to the research community and has helped to facilitate coordination and planning across organizations," says Dr. Elizabeth Eisenhauer, Co-Chair of the CCRA and Research Action Group Chair at the Partnership. "This report reveals specific insights into investment in childhood/adolescent cancer research, one important part of the research continuum. Within the next couple of years, we will release reports focused on the investment in other key research areas, such as prevention and survivorship."

In addition to funding the CCRA, its annual survey and this special report on childhood and adolescent cancers, the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer supports other programs in the area of cancers in young Canadians. One of these is the Adolescent and Young Adult Task Force. With funding from the Partnership, the task force is leading a four-year investigation to better understand the cancer experience among adolescents and young adults, particularly the transition from pediatric to adult cancer centres. Alongside the task force, C<sup>17</sup> and the Partnership are co-sponsoring a workshop called *Adolescents and Young Adults with cancer: Guidelines and research towards better outcomes*. The workshop will take place in Toronto in March 2010.

“By learning more about cancer in young people and using this knowledge to improve care, we are helping to ensure better outcomes and treatment opportunities for young Canadians,” says Jessica Hill, CEO of the Partnership. “We are proud to be part of these efforts.”

### **Canadian Cancer Research Survey**

The Canadian Cancer Research Survey is an ongoing activity of the Canadian Cancer Research Alliance. The survey database is now comprised of information on all cancer research projects actively funded in calendar years 2005 to 2007 (7,203 projects in total) by 37 funding organizations/programs. All projects within the database were classified according to type of research and type of cancer. The Common Scientific Outline (CSO), an international classification system specific to cancer research, was used to classify research type. The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th Revision, Version for 2007 (ICD-10) was used to classify cancer site.

The term “cancer research investment” is used within the CCRA report to represent cancer research projects that received some form of peer review, and were administered by the organizations participating in the survey. Unless otherwise noted, research projects were included under the organization which administered the grants and awards programs even in those situations where the project was funded by more than one organization. The full report, “Cancer Research Investment in Canada,” and companion PowerPoint presentations are available at the CCRA web site: [http://www.ccra-acrc.ca/default\\_en.htm](http://www.ccra-acrc.ca/default_en.htm).

### **The Canadian Cancer Research Alliance**

The 23 member organizations of CCRA are: Alberta Cancer Research Institute; Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research; BC Cancer Agency; Canadian Association of Provincial Cancer Agencies; Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation; Canadian Breast Cancer Research Alliance; Canadian Cancer Society; Canadian Institutes of Health Research; CancerCare Manitoba; Cancer Care Nova Scotia; Cancer Care Ontario; Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec; Genome Canada; Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research; National Research Council of Canada; New Brunswick Cancer Network; Ontario Institute for Cancer Research; Prostate Cancer Canada; Public Health Agency of Canada; Saskatchewan Cancer Agency; The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer; The Cancer Research Society; and The Terry Fox Foundation.

### **The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer**

The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer is an independent organization funded by the federal government to accelerate action on cancer control for all Canadians. It brings together cancer survivors, patients and families, cancer experts and government representatives to implement the first pan-Canadian cancer control strategy. The Partnership’s vision is to be a driving force to achieve a focused approach that will help prevent cancer, enhance the quality of life of those affected by cancer, lessen the likelihood of dying from cancer, and increase the efficiency of cancer control in Canada.

For more information, visit: [www.partnershipagainstcancer.ca](http://www.partnershipagainstcancer.ca).

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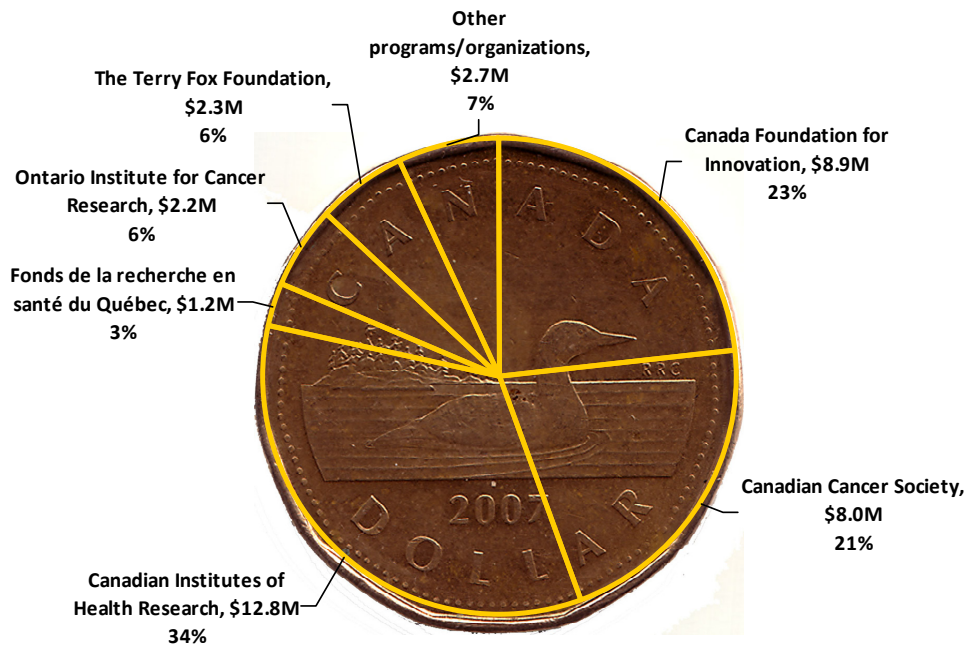
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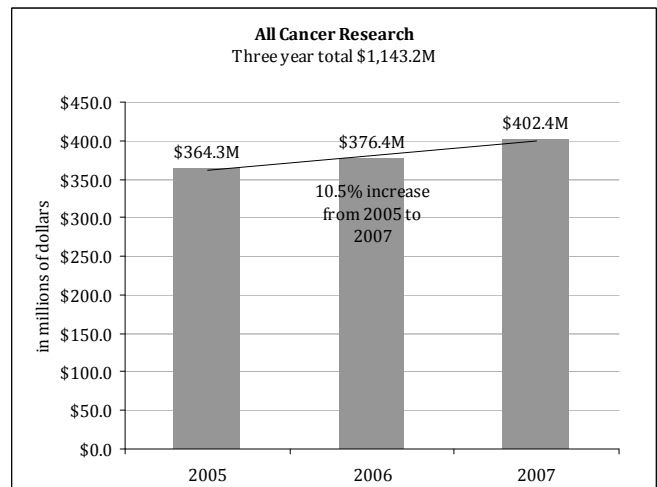
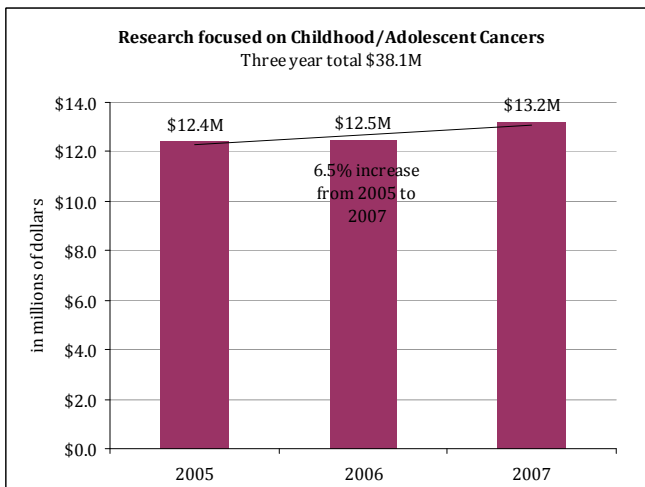
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**FIGURE 1.**  
**Distribution of investment in childhood/adolescent cancer research, Canada, 2005-2007**

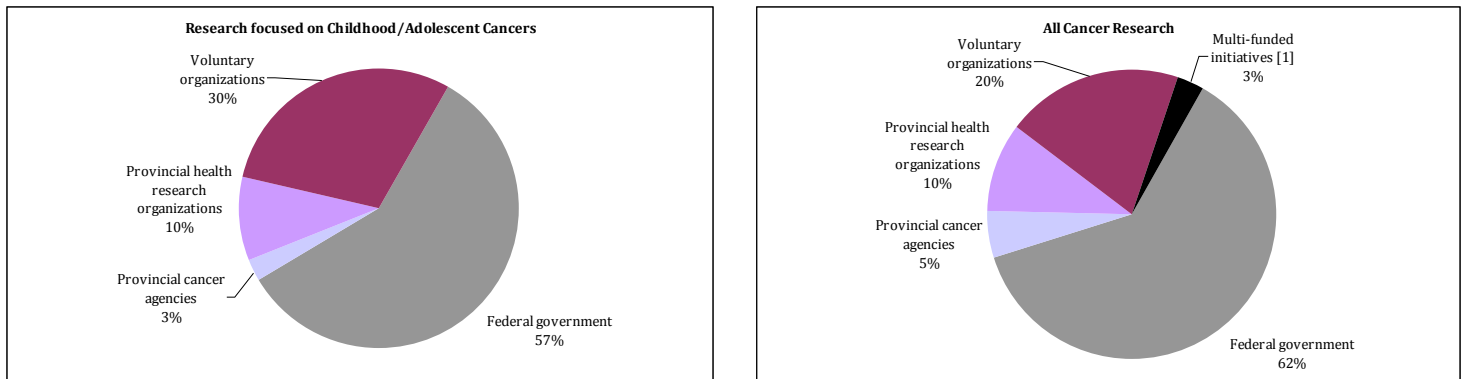


**FIGURE 2.**  
**Cancer research investment (in dollars), 2005-2007**



**FIGURE 3.**

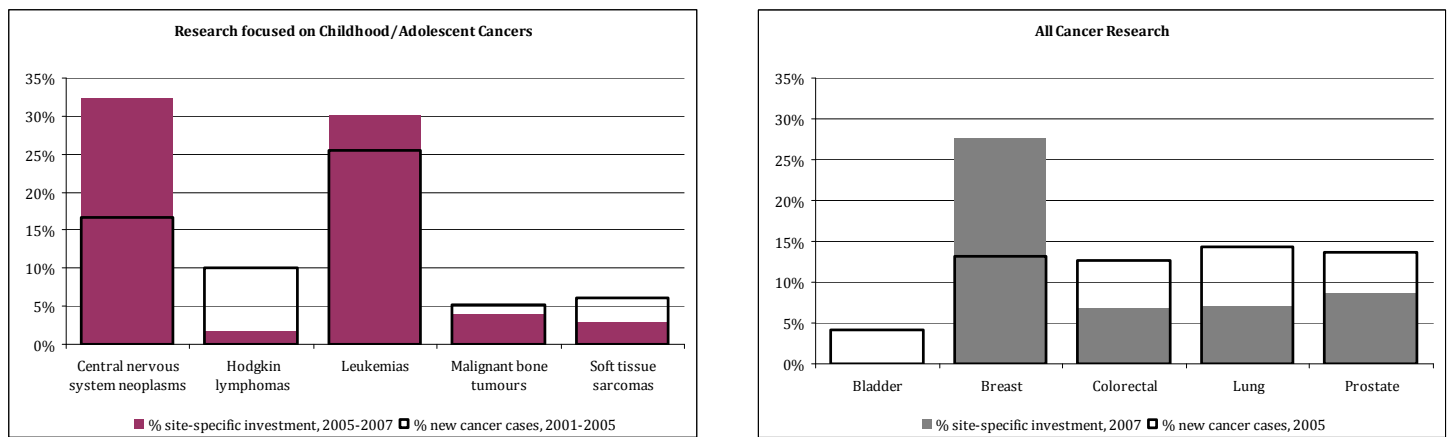
**Distribution of cancer research investment by sector of funding organization, 2005-2007**



[1] Multi-funded initiatives involve funding partnerships between federal government and voluntary sector organizations.

**FIGURE 4.**

**Distribution of site-specific cancer research investment and new cancer cases for most common cancers**



**FIGURE 5.**  
**Distribution of cancer research investment by research area, 2005-2007**

