



PRIORITY AREA: CHILDHOOD CANCER



Viertel Cancer  
Research Centre

# Late Effects of Childhood Cancer

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The incidence of cancer among children is rare but is increasing over time. More than 20,000 Australians alive today who were diagnosed with a cancer as a child. While improving survival rates is the good news, the not so good news is the potential impact that treatment for childhood cancer may have on longer term health, including into adulthood. International research shows that up to 80% of childhood cancer survivors experience late effects including physical, psychological and social problems. It is also estimated that one-third of childhood cancer survivors experience severe or life-threatening complications within 25 years of their initial cancer diagnosis. There is a clear need for Australian studies to quantify the health care use and long-term health outcomes, or late effects, among childhood cancer survivors.

## What is the study?

The Australian Childhood Cancer Registry provides the ideal platform to investigate this question, using many data linkages with other population databases such as the Medicare Benefits Schedule, Hospital admissions, and mental health, fertility, education datasets, along with many others. This will provide the necessary data to comprehensively assess the impact of these late effects on Australians diagnosed with cancer while children, and to compare those with siblings and their peers. This project represents a collaboration with University of Sydney and University of Queensland, with additional funding received from Cancer Australia and the Medical Research Future Fund. Support and expertise have also been provided through the Population Health Research Network, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and Data Linkage Units around the country.

## Why is this project important?

The results of this study will provide critical evidence to inform the future development of interventions to reduce the impact of late effects of receiving treatment for a childhood cancer, including what constitutes appropriate follow up care to help prevent and manage future health risks.

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