

## 2016/2017 Summer Studentship Project Application Form

Send to: Research Office, University of Otago Christchurch, PO Box 4345, Christchurch, by 5pm on **4 July 2016**

### Supervisor Information (First named supervisor will be the contact):

First Supervisor's Name and Title: Tristan Pettit

Department - UOC &/or CDHB (if applicable): Pediatric Oncology

First Supervisors Phone: 0278862142

First Supervisors Tristan.Pettit@cdhb.health.nz

First Supervisors Mailing Address: Child Health, Christchurch Hospital. 2 Riccarton Ave, Christchurch 8011

Co-Supervisors Name & Title(s): CDHB: Ruth Spearing; Gordon Beadel; Louise Sue; Southern DHB: Louise Bremner, Val Waugh

### Research Category (Choose one category only – to be used for judging the students' presentations):

**Clinical**

**Laboratory**

**Community**

### Project Title (20 words MAXIMUM):

Diagnostic delay in AYA sarcoma patients – does it exist and what are contributing factors?

### Project Description:

AYA Cancer – Delayed Diagnoses

#### Introduction:

Adolescent and young adults (AYA) are at risk of delayed diagnosis and presenting with advanced or metastatic disease. There is a correlation between prolonged symptom interval and an increased mortality rate for young people with solid tumors. Research shows that the majority of delay occurs with the AYA themselves delaying seeking medical attention for a myriad of reasons. The combination of lack of cancer symptom awareness among young people and limited exposure of GP's to cancer among AYA's can also contribute to a delay. The referral process including timely access to the right expertise is also a critical factor.

#### Aim:

This retrospective review will aim to identify any common factors in delay to diagnosis and start of treatment including:

- Recognition of initial possible diagnosis – duration of symptoms / number of visits to health providers.
- Timing of referral from primary care.
- Actioning of referral in specialist services
- Method of communication between primary and secondary/tertiary care services
- Patient demographics such as age / sex / urban or rural domicile / social stratification (income etc) / educational background.

#### Possible impact (in lay terms):

Identifying common delay factors may allow development of improved access to specialist treatment for AYAs. This initial study may lead to further studies exploring the psycho-social and health-system barriers unique to the AYA population which might inhibit their early presentation and diagnosis across a range of tumour streams. Such information could result in better outcomes for AYAs if barriers to early diagnosis and treatment can be reduced.

#### Method:

This "pilot" will use one tumour stream (Sarcoma).

The student will identify and compare the 10 most recent AYA (15-24yrs) sarcoma patients, to 10 paediatric (0-15yrs) sarcoma patients and 10 adult (25+yrs) sarcoma patients, all of whom live in the South Island.

The student will review all clinical documents relating to each patient including;

- Clinical Notes – inpatient/outpatient and documents available on Health Connect South
- GP / Primary Care visit notes (if available)
- Electronic records of visits to health providers

- Referral made to specialist
- Imaging conducted and timing of such imaging
- Lab tests taken and timing of such tests

In order to collect information on the following:

1. Time from first AYA recognized symptom to first AYA presentation to a health provider
2. The number of AYA presentations to a health provider prior to referral with suspicion of cancer
3. The time from first AYA presentation with symptoms to being referred with suspicion of cancer
4. The time from referral being made to first specialist appointment
5. The time from first specialist appointment to confirmation of diagnosis
6. The time from confirmation of diagnosis to commencement of treatment.

Student Prerequisites (eg. Medical Student) if applicable: