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## Brain tumours 'forgotten cancer'

**More funding needs to be ploughed into research into the "forgotten cancer" of brain tumours, campaigners say.**

Brain Tumour Research called for action after publishing figures showing they were now the leading cause of cancer deaths among younger age groups.

Only £3m a year - 1% of cancer research spending - goes on brain tumours, meaning survival rates are low.

However, the death rates are also a reflection of the fact cancer still predominantly affects older people.

When the whole population is taken into account, brain tumours were responsible for nearly 3,300 deaths last year. That represents just over 2% of all cancer deaths.

The charity has published a report, compiled from official NHS statistics, to push its case.

It showed that with 266 deaths last year, more men under the age of 45 were dying from brain tumours than any other cancer. After that age, lung cancer is the biggest cancer killer.

For women, tumours were the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the under 35s, claiming 78 lives. After that point, breast cancer becomes the biggest cause of death.

And in children, brain tumours have overtaken leukaemia as the leading cause of death with 89 deaths over the last year where figures were available.

The charity said part of the problem was that five-year survival rates for brain tumours were poor in comparison to many other forms of cancer.

### Struggle

Just 14% of people diagnosed with brain tumours will be alive five years later, compared to over half for many other cancers.

The charity warned the true figures could be even higher as the figures only take into account cases where brain tumours were the primary site of cancer not where it had spread to the brain from another site.

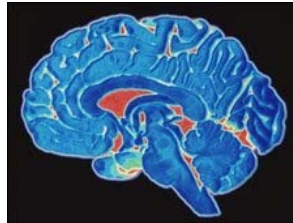
Wendy Fulcher, chairman of Brain Tumour Research, said: "The government and major cancer research donors must increase the proportion it spends on research or the shocking statistics will only get worse."

And Kevin O'Neill, a neurosurgeon at Imperial College London, agreed more needed to be done.

"They can't be prevented or screened for as we don't know the cause. It is frustrating that treatment options are so limited. More research is desperately needed, but we are struggling to get funds."

A Department of Health spokeswoman said: "Research is essential in tackling cancer and the government invests more in cancer research than in any other area of health."

"The National Cancer Research Network is currently running 23 studies for children with brain tumours and is supporting an additional 12



The technique uses molecular profiling of brain tumour samples

**“ The government and major cancer research donors must increase the proportion it spends on research or the shocking statistics will only get worse ”**

Wendy Fulcher, chairman of Brain Tumour Research

**“ Research is essential in tackling cancer and the government invests more in cancer research than in any other area of health ”**

Department of Health

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studies for adults with brain tumours.

"The department is also investing £1.9m over two years to help maintain the National Registry of Childhood Tumours, the largest population-based childhood cancer registry in the world."

Cancer Research said it was investing in science to reduce deaths from brain cancer.

Director of cancer information, Dr Lesley Walker, said: "There will continue to be a strong focus on research to better understand the causes of brain cancer and an investment into the development of exciting new treatments as well as techniques to detect it as soon as possible - when therapy is more likely to be successful."

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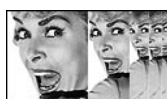
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