



Daisy's Eye Cancer Fund

A Global Response To Childhood Retinoblastoma

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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate use

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New report demands action to challenge childhood cancer deaths.

Global childhood cancer awareness will receive a boost this month when an Oxford-based charity releases its latest action report during a special World Awareness Week. "Rat's Challenge: Hope For Africa" emphasizes the urgent need to scale up support for children with cancer in developing countries, where thousands are dying from curable cancer.

Daisy's Eye Cancer Fund (DECF) established World Retinoblastoma Awareness Week last year with the Childhood Eye Cancer Trust, to highlight "white pupil" in flash photography as an early sign of the potentially blinding and fatal eye cancer, retinoblastoma. The international charity, dedicated to improving care for affected children, will publish the second "Rati's Challenge" report on its website on Wednesday 14 May 2008 at 9am. The awareness week runs from 11 – 17 May.

"Every child has the right to access essential life-saving care" says Abby White, co-founder and Chief Executive of DECF, and a survivor of cancer in both eyes. "Cure is above 96% In England and other developed countries, but less than 30% in most lower-income countries.

- MORE -



Childhood Cancer Report Demands Action (page 2).

“Simple changes can increase the effectiveness of therapies already available in most developing countries, to dramatically improve survival and quality of life for children in treatment. As a compassionate global community, we must act now to ensure that all children have access to the same opportunities for cure that are available to children in our own privileged society”.

When diagnosed early, cure may be as simple as surgical removal of the affected eye. Treatment is complicated and vastly more costly when cancer spreads beyond the eye due to lack of awareness, delayed diagnosis, stigma that prevents acceptance of surgical therapy, and lack of support for affected families.

DECF is currently developing a novel approach of nationally coordinated care for children in resource-limited countries, who currently fail to access timely, optimal treatment. The charity’s report presents this ground-breaking project in Kenya, illustrating the challenges and simple actions needed to combat this devastating, but highly curable cancer of infancy and early childhood.

For more information, visit www.daisyseyecancerfund.org, or contact Abby White at abby@daisyseyecancerfund.org or 01865-243-654. Donations can be made online at www.daisyseyecancerfund.org/donate.

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Childhood Cancer Report Demands Action (page 3).

Editor's Notes:

- **Statistics** from Daisy's Eye Cancer Fund.
- **Retinoblastoma** is a cancer of the developing retina that can affect one or both eyes. Tumours typically develop before the age of 4 years, and some babies are both with this cancer. Vision saving treatments include laser, freezing therapy, chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Many children undergo surgical removal of the eye to protect their life.
- **Daisy's Eye Cancer Fund** is a registered charity in England, a special fund within the charitable foundation of SickKids Hospital, Toronto, Canada, and a registered NGO in Kenya. The organisation supports vital awareness campaigns and research, and is currently developing a model care strategy for use in resource-poor countries, so that the lives of many more children can be saved.
- **Rati's Challenge** was inspired by a little girl who died at the age of 4 years due to delayed and incomplete medical care in Botswana. The program aims to develop a prototype National Strategy for delivery of optimal care - and access to that care – in resource-limited countries: a model that can be adapted and implemented around the world.
- **Enclosures:**
 - ["Rati's Challenge: Hope for Africa" 2008 report - Introduction](#)
 - [A photograph illustrating "white pupil"](#)
 - [DECF leaflet](#)
 - ["Rati's Challenge" leaflet](#)
 - ["SeeRed" leaflet](#)
 - [Childhood cancer factsheet](#)