

## ONCOLOGY

# Donald Gordon Medi-Clinic Offers Cancer Expertise

With six highly qualified medical oncologists on the staff at Medi-Clinic's Wits University Donald Gordon Medical Centre (WDGMC), more and more cancer sufferers are able to access the very best in cancer care in the country.

Adult medical oncologists, Dr Adam Nosworthy and Dr Georgia Demetriou, are two of the medical oncologists who practise at WDGMC, and also on the academic staff at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital.

"Cancer is more visible than ever before and therefore many more people are seeking help. As patients are referred earlier for oncological problems, we have a greater number

of options available to treat cancers, and a lot more can be done for these individuals," said Dr Nosworthy.

Targeted oncology treatments have improved the outcomes of very many cancers, Dr Nosworthy says. "Previously, oncology treatment was extremely severe, but with the ability to target specific markers, we can greatly decrease side effects."

As a result, many cancers previously considered incurable are now able to be greatly shrunk, increasing quality and length of life in a far greater number of patients than ever before.

#### The facility

The adult oncology unit at WDGMC can accommodate up to 28 inpatients. However,

the bulk of chemotherapy is administered on an outpatient basis. An average of 60 patients are seen per day in the outpatient facility, although up to 100 patients per day can be accommodated. Here, patients' blood counts are checked and if determined suitable, chemotherapy is administered by trained oncology nursing staff.

The hospital offers a strong paediatric oncology unit headed up by Prof Janet Poole, who is also part of the paediatric oncology staff at Charlotte Maxeke Hospital and Chris Hani Baragwanath.

Two hood and mixing facilities operate at WDGMC - one in the outpatient facility and another within the hospital itself to service

the paediatric oncology unit - allowing the pharmacy to prepare chemotherapy medication on hospital premises.

The WDGMC also runs a number of clinical trials within the oncology field at its facility located at 18 Eton Road, Parktown (across the road from the main hospital building and the oncologists' practices). Over 20 trials are currently in progress, and they give certain suitable patients access to newer oncology therapies.

Apart from chemotherapy facilities at WDGMC, a transplantation unit is also in operation, as well as a full radiation oncology practice. Staff at this radiation oncology practice all serve as academic staff in respect of training specialising doctors.

#### Highest quality oncology care

In SA, doctors and patients have access to most oncology therapy, allowing for intensive investigation and therapeutic interventions equivalent, and at times even superior, to those offered in developed countries such as the US and the UK, Dr Nosworthy explained.

Advances such as the PET scanner allow the oncologists to assess the patient's response to treatment extremely accurately, to detect how advanced cancers are and to diagnose accordingly.

The oncologists work closely with all medical staff involved in the process of treating cancer

The WDGMC's oncology unit is efficient and effective because its staff employs a multidisciplinary approach to the treatment of cancer. The oncologists work closely with all medical staff involved in the process of treating cancer, including surgeons, physicians, gastroenterologists and others," Dr Nosworthy added. "We assess what is best for the patient by working together. By deciding, for example, if a patient should have surgery before chemotherapy, we can provide better care for our patients and better potential outcomes."

Dr Demetriou asserts that both the adult and paediatric oncology units at WDGMC are highly specialised academically, also offering the highest quality care. "Our oncology units treat patients with compassion and a large amount of expertise. This is a highly specialised group of people with a wealth of experience in treating both adult and paediatric oncology patients."

#### Private academic hospital

WDGMC is a one-of-a-kind medical institution in that it is the only private academic and training hospital in SA. The facility trains specialists and subspecialists across 14 different disciplines.

Currently, two fellow posts are funded by WDGMC for specialist physicians who are super- or subspecialising in medical oncology. These individuals are offered the unique opportunity to undertake rotations at the teaching facility at Charlotte Maxeke Hospital, while being exposed to teaching cases at WDGMC.



The Wits Donald Gordon Medical Centre is a private Academic Hospital providing quality multidisciplinary care.

The centre was established to enhance training of specialists and sub-specialists.

Units of excellence already established:

- Transplant unit
- Adult and Paediatric Oncology unit
- ICU (Closed ICU with doctor on site 24 hours a day)
- Medical and Surgical Gastroenterology
- Endovascular Surgery
- Geriatric Medicine
- Arthroplasty

Wits University  
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