

NATIONAL ANAPLASTIC THYROID CANCER TISSUE BANK AND DATABASE PROJECT (NATT)

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Background/Purpose: Anaplastic thyroid cancer is difficult to research due to rarity and poor prognosis and is usually refractory to current treatment options.

Following recognition of the difficulties by International Rare Cancer Initiative in 2011 a proposal was developed in the UK to create a tissue bank to facilitate research.

Methods: All UK patients with anaplastic thyroid cancer are eligible. The project is expected to run for at least 5 years. Patients will donate surplus thyroid cancer tissue following routine biopsy plus an optional blood sample and clinical data. Samples will be hosted at Wales Cancer Bank and clinical data entered on Thyroid Cancer Forum-UK national database.

Researchers will apply to the NATT steering group for access to the collection in order to try and establish the causal mechanisms for disease development, potential therapeutic targets and to relate clinical course and outcome with specific molecular defects.

Results: The objective is to increase our understanding of the aetiology and disease trajectory and ultimately to develop new therapeutic interventions that may slow the rate of disease progression, improve quality of life and prolong survival.

Discussion & Conclusion: This is a unique project within the setting of anaplastic thyroid cancer research.

By utilising a national tissue and data resource model a significant number of patients can be studied in a realistic research timeframe. The project has the potential to help with our understanding of the disease aetiology and to open new avenues for treatment interventions.