# Researchers seek juvenile cancer cause

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MELBOURNE researchers are working to crack a rare type of ovarian cancer that typically hits around puberty, but can strike before a girl's first birthday.

A team from the Hudson Institute of Medical Research is trying to unpick the genetic spelling mistakes that trigger granulosa cell tumours to develop, and consequently find the treatment needed to stop them returning.

Dr Simon Chu and his hormone cancer therapeutics research group are the only Australians researching this type of cancer, one that unusually grows from within the ovary and makes up about 5 per cent of ovarian cancer cases.

They are focusing on making headway on a rare juvenile subtype of the cancer.

While they are slow growing, the genetic causes for what triggers juvenile granulosa cell tumours are unknown.

In 30 per cent of females, the cancer returns and they have a poor prognosis.

Dr Chu's team has collected tumour samples from 20 patients around the world to compare its genetics to healthy DNA samples taken from the same patient.

One of the tumour samples being analysed belongs to Victorian girl Neve, who became the youngest Australian diagnosed with this juvenile ovarian cancer at 11 months of age.

The tumour was the size of a softball when it was detected and it sent the baby into early puberty, which reversed itself once the tumour on her ovary was surgically removed.

Neve, now 8, had four months of chemotherapy.

**Neve was diagnosed with a rare ovarian cancer aged 11 months.**