



MEDIA RELEASE

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More volunteers needed as breast cancer prevention study reaches milestone.

IBIS-II, a major international breast cancer prevention study, reaches an important milestone this month with 5,000 women around the world volunteering to take part in the study. However, many more volunteers are needed to help the study reach the international goal of 10,000 women.

IBIS-II is being conducted in Australia and New Zealand by the Australian New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group (ANZ BCTG) and is coordinated internationally by Cancer Research UK. It is the second prevention study undertaken by the ANZ BCTG and follows the landmark IBIS-I study which showed that breast cancer could be prevented in women at high risk using the drug tamoxifen.

The new, unique and vitally important IBIS-II study, which is supported in Australia by the National Health and Medical Research Council, is the only trial worldwide to investigate whether a drug called anastrozole can prevent breast cancer in postmenopausal women who are at increased risk of the disease.

Previous research on anastrozole as a treatment for early breast cancer suggests that it could prevent up to 70 percent of new tumours occurring, but to confirm its role in preventing the disease in women at increased risk, a large comparative outcomes study must be conducted. More women are encouraged to participate so that the results are obtained as soon as possible.

Professor John Forbes, ANZ BCTG Director of Research and International IBIS-II Study Co-Chairman said "It is very gratifying that so many women have come forward to take part in the IBIS-II study, as the findings from this research could provide a valuable approach to prevent breast cancer, not only for women today but also for their daughters and granddaughters in the future."

The study was launched in Australia and New Zealand in 2005 and now involves 36 institutions and more than 580 women – more than 10% of the global total.

"This represents a remarkable collaboration by the researchers of the ANZ BCTG with their international colleagues and it highlights the important contribution being made by women in Australia and New Zealand that may ultimately provide benefit globally for millions of women," Professor Forbes said.

The study is open to women aged 40-70 years who have passed the menopause and are at increased risk of breast cancer, due to a family history or other risk factors such as high breast density or benign breast disease.

More than 12,000 women in Australia and 2,500 women in New Zealand are diagnosed with breast cancer every year. Improvements have been made in recent years in the treatment of breast cancer, and more cancers are being diagnosed early through national screening programmes. However, it is vital to continue addressing the big questions in research and this includes learning more about how to prevent breast cancer.

Women in Australia can find out more about whether they are eligible to take part in the study by calling 1800 640 709. More information is also available on the ANZ BCTG website: www.anzbctg.org.

Ends

For media enquiries or to interview an IBIS-II spokesperson or a participant on the study, please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About IBIS-II (International Breast cancer Intervention Study II)

IBIS-II is being coordinated in Australia and New Zealand by the Australian New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group and globally by Cancer Research UK. The trial is taking place in 21 countries including Australia, New Zealand, India, Chile, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom.

- The IBIS-II Prevention part of the study aims to recruit 6,000 postmenopausal women who are at increased risk of developing breast cancer. A number of factors for increased risk can make a woman eligible to enter the study and these are set according to the different age groups. Women can take part in the trial if they are aged between 40 and 70 years and are not on HRT.
- IBIS-II DCIS will recruit 4,000 postmenopausal women who have been diagnosed with and had surgery to remove Ductal Carcinoma in Situ (DCIS). This part of the trial is designed to determine which of the two drugs, anastrozole or tamoxifen, can best prevent new cancers, both in the breast affected by DCIS and in the opposite breast. Women who have had a mastectomy to remove their DCIS cannot join this arm of the trial but they can be part of IBIS-II Prevention.
- Further information on IBIS-II is available at www.anzbctg.org.
- In Australia women can obtain more information on IBIS-II by telephoning 1800 640 709.

About the Australian New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group

The Australian New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group (ANZ BCTG) is Australia's national breast cancer research group. It is dedicated entirely to breast cancer research through the conduct of multi-institution and international clinical trials for the treatment and prevention of breast cancer. Working in collaboration with 300 researchers in more than 80 of the leading medical institutions in Australia and New Zealand, and with similar research groups in 15 countries internationally ensures Australia and New Zealand are at the forefront of breast cancer research progress and this delivers benefits to women immediately. Additional information can be found at www.anzbctg.org.