

Child cancer deaths led by brain tumours

Caroline Davies **The Observer** Sunday 26 April 2009

Brain tumours are the leading cause of childhood [cancer](#) deaths in Britain, with half as many more [children](#) dying from the illness as from leukaemia. Figures from the Office of National Statistics show that in 2007 there were 47% more deaths from brain tumours among under-15s than from leukaemia.

Yet that is not reflected in the money spent on research, say campaigners.

This week sees the launch of Brain Tumour Research, a national coalition of 14 charities, which believe that research is "woefully underfunded". It is backed by celebrities including the actress Sheila Hancock, whose grandson survived a tumour, and actor Martin Kemp and opera singer Russell Watson, who were both treated successfully.

Hancock, 76, the widow of actor John Thaw, saw her grandson Jack diagnosed with a rare tumour aged four. "It is terrible to watch a grandchild go through the diagnosis and treatment of a brain tumour. You feel so helpless." Jack was successfully operated on.

Kevin O'Neill, a consultant neurosurgeon at Imperial College London, said: "Brain tumours are on the increase, reportedly in the region of 2% per year. But in my unit we have seen the number of cases nearly double in the last year."

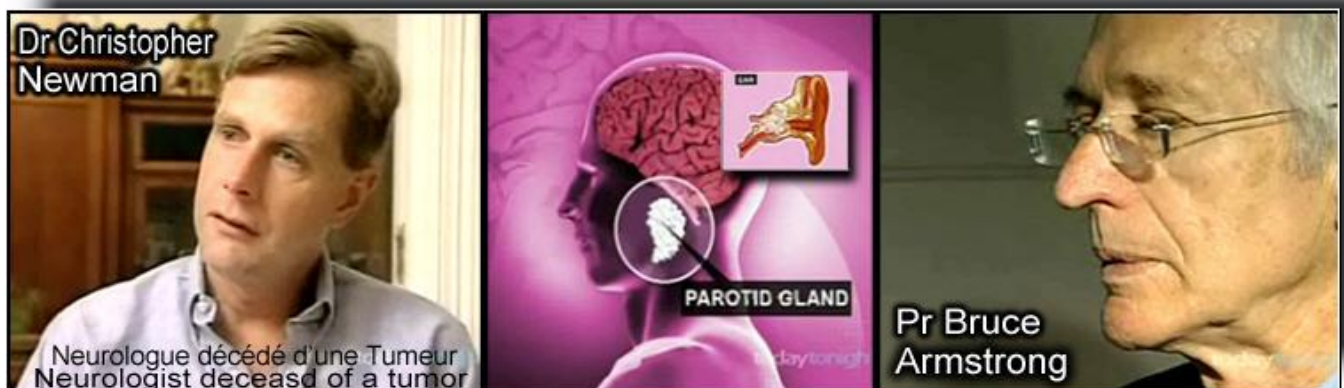
Braintumourresearch.org



Ph. ajt. Next-up organization



Kevin O'Neil, neurosurgeon
Ph. ajt. Next-up organization



Seven Network: [Health fears over mobile phones \[click\]](#)