

Cycling for a cure to a rare ovarian cancer

By **BRODIE EVERIST**

TWELVE charity volunteers cycled into Wangaratta last Wednesday, riding from Canberra to Melbourne to raise funds for a cure for Juvenile Granulosa Cell Tumour (JGCT), an extremely rare ovarian cancer.

They initially planned to raise \$100,000 for the charity Rare Ovarian Cancers Incorporated, but as of Wednesday they had raised more than \$122,000.

Claire Reaburn, wife of cyclist Peter Reaburn, was diagnosed with JGCT at the age of 53, making her one of the oldest people to be diagnosed - usually the cancer affects young women.

"I've had probably about seven or eight surgeries, four rounds of chemo and numerous types of medication with this cancer and none of them tend to work and it just keeps on coming back," Ms Reaburn said.

"I had major surgery in March last year and had 10 tumours removed, and within a month and a half, I had four new tumours form."

Team member Stephen Mitchell was riding for his 21-year-old daughter who was diagnosed at the age of 19.

Another cyclist on the ride, Dr Simon Chu, is a lead researcher into JGCT at the Hudson Institute of Medical Research in Melbourne.

He said that JGCT is so rare it has often been overlooked for research funding.

The cancer accounts for less than half a per cent of all ovarian cancers.

Dr Chu's team is working to repurpose treatments or develop new drugs for JGCT, as he said conventional chemotherapy doesn't work.

"Generally oncologists will treat these tumours with chemotherapy, and that has absolutely no efficacy whatsoever," he said.

Surgery can be effective if it is detected in early stages, said Dr Chu, but between 30 and 40 per cent of tumours will reappear, sometimes years after treatment.

"Sometimes that recurrence will come five to 20-30 years down the track, and then when they do recur, they're very, very difficult to treat."

The cyclists planned to reach Melbourne yesterday on World Ovarian Cancer Day and Mother's Day.



09 MAY, 2022

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Wangaratta Chronicle, Wangaratta



RIDING FOR RESEARCH: Visiting Wangaratta on their fundraising ride last week were (from front, heading clockwise) Sheree Osbourne, Mara Ferraro, Stephen Mitchell, Lee-Ann Dalton, Michael Dalton, Dr Simon Chu, Peter Smith, Peter Reaburn, Ken Theodore, Hannah Armstrong, Natalie Watson, and Gemma Foord.

PHOTO: Steve Kelly