Clinical Trials in Pediatrics

By Amy Bentley

CLINICAL TRIALS: SHARING KNOWLEDGE

“A clinical trial is a research project that involves patients,” says Dr. Antonio Arrieta, a CHOC Children’s Pediatric Infectious Disease Specialist. “All drugs, vaccines and medical devices have to go through phases of research before they are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. If researchers and physicians don’t conduct these trials, we don’t know how good the drugs are or how we are supposed to use them. The expectation is that these new drugs will be better or improve the established standard of care. The standard of care oftentimes has a lot of room for improvement. We think we can do better. We want to make sure new drugs are safe and that we get the best results. Some trials we have done have introduced new agents that have greatly improved mortality rates and the survival of patients.”

PATIENT PARTICIPATION

Physicians and researchers conducting clinical trials talk to other physicians at CHOC to identify potential patients to participate. “We make sure they meet the criteria and then talk to the parents to get informed consent,” says Dr. Arrieta. “We discuss the pros and cons of the study and why we are doing it. It’s voluntary and there are no consequences to not participating. We monitor patients closely to make sure the child is responding to treatment or gets better. No procedures are done on children that will increase their pain or discomfort and we can stop a trial with a patient any time the parent wishes.”

6-7
AVERAGE NUMBER OF PEER-REVIEWED RESEARCH PAPERS PUBLISHED ANNUALLY FROM CHOC’S INFECTIOUS DISEASE DIVISION

300
APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF CLINICAL TRIALS UNDERWAY AT CHOC AT ANY GIVEN TIME

10
APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF NEWBORNS EXPOSED TO HIV IN-UTERO REFERRED TO CHOC’S PEDIATRIC HIV CLINIC EACH YEAR

Ranked Among the Nation’s Top Children’s Hospitals*

A cancer diagnosis touches the lives of the entire family. For this reason, the specialists at the Hyundai Cancer Institute at CHOC Children’s are dedicated to a family-centered approach to care that includes immediately pairing patients and their families with a pediatric oncology nurse coordinator who serves as their advocate throughout treatment. In addition to treating the disease, we are dedicated to meeting the needs of the whole child—emotional, spiritual, and physical. Children shouldn’t have to give up being kids while dealing with the grown-up issues of cancer.

Find out more at www.choc.org/cancer

*2013-14 U.S. News and World Report