



Canadian Cancer Society  
Société canadienne du cancer

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## Costs of cancer research

### How our funding is used

It takes a lot of resources – both monetary and people – to run a successful research program. Scientists can be thought of as entrepreneurs who every year must ensure that there is enough money in grants to be able to finance their research operation – be it a lab, a clinic or an office.



That means money for all sorts of equipment from test tubes, to the most sophisticated microscopes, to state-of-the-art computers and computer-assisted devices. It means money to support the people doing the research: technicians, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, clinical trials nurses, data clerks and so on. In most research and academic institutions, if scientists fail to secure funding for on-going projects, they will soon find themselves without a viable research operation.

A Canadian scientist running a biomedical lab for one year could spend in the range of \$50,000 to \$500,000. Some of the general costs:

- microscopes can be \$15,000 to over \$100,000
- sophisticated, three-dimensional microscopes might be \$500,000
- centrifuges (machines used to separate substances of different densities) are \$40,000 and specialized ultra-cold freezers are \$10,000
- one lab technician for one year could cost around \$50,000 (depending on the locale and seniority of the technician)
- enough cancer cells for 1 experiment, including shipping, could be \$300 to \$500
- enzymes, which are necessary for modern molecular biology, cost \$100 to \$300
- a single test tube costs a nickel or dime
- clinical trials or epidemiological studies cost millions of dollars.

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