

# Grant To Fund ECU Sickle Cell Study

Greenville - A new study at the East Carolina University School of Medicine will investigate the nutritional needs of children with sickle cell disease in a project funded by Ronald McDonald Children's Charities (RMCC).

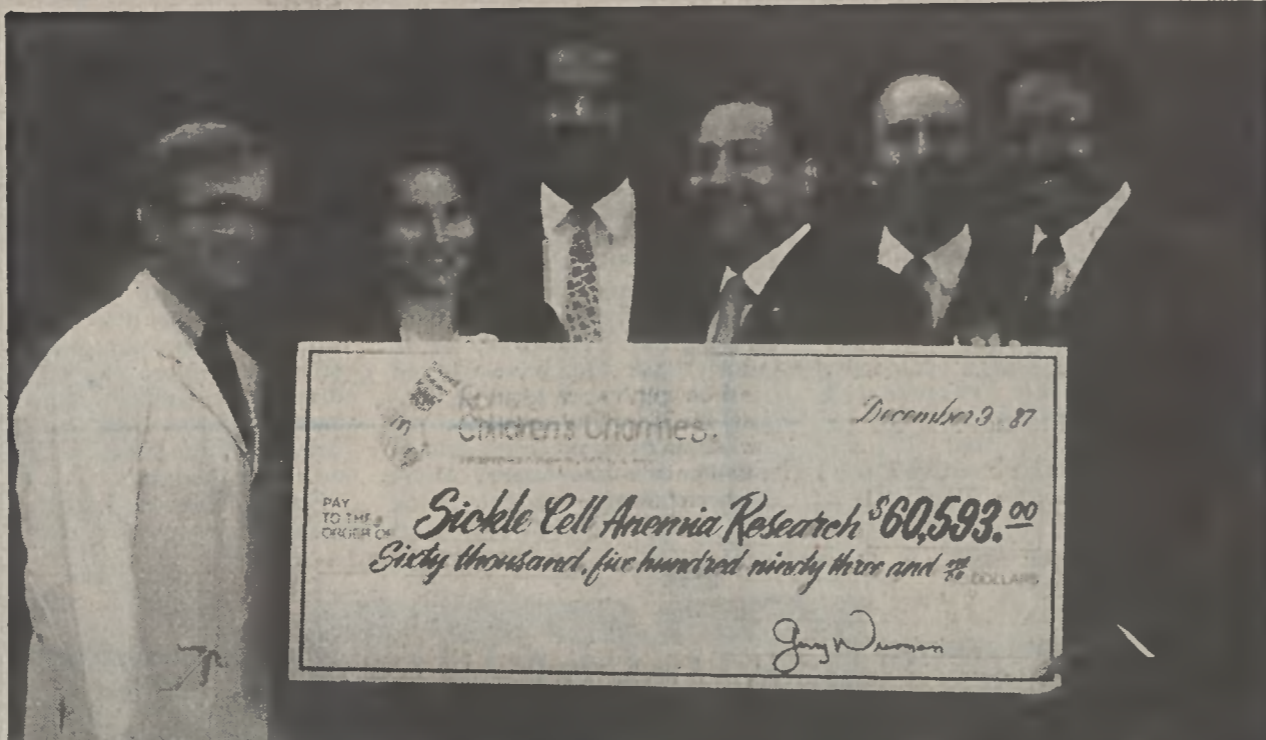
The one-year study, wholly supported by a \$60,593 RMCC grant, will be conducted by ECU dietitian Nancy T. Gray and hematologist Dr. C. Tate Holbrook through the medical schools Regional Comprehensive Sickle Cell Program.

RMCC, established in 1984 in memory of McDonald's founder Ray A. Kroc, awards grants to not-for-profit organizations helping children. More than 100 Ronald McDonald Houses, including the recently completed Ronald McDonald House of Eastern North Carolina located in Greenville, represent the cornerstone of RMCC.

"With the support of the McDonald's family and our customers, RMCC is pleased to assist this worthwhile children's program," said RMCC representative Dr. John Falletta, chief of pediatric hematology/oncology at Duke University Medical Center. "Since its inception in 1984", he added, "RMCC has awarded 226 grants totaling nearly \$7 million."

Sickle cell disease, confined largely to black populations, is the world's most common hereditary blood disorder. In the United States, one in every 500 black children is afflicted with sickle cell disease.

According to Holbrook, the disorder damages a child's red blood cells, limiting their ability to carry oxygen to body tissues



ECU sickle cell researchers (from left) Tate Holbrook and Nancy Gray accept a \$60,593 check from McDonald's representatives Charles Crump, Bill Pretty, Bill Freelove and Wes Elam. Crump heads field services

for the McDonald's Raleigh region office while Pretty, Freelove and Elam are McDonald's licensees with restaurants in the region.

and distorting their normal disk-like shape into sticky, malformed sickles that can readily clog small blood vessels.

With symptoms often developing soon after birth, the disorder can result in anemia, recurrent pain, retarded growth, and eventual organ damage.

The ECU study will document the nutritional status of children with sickle cell disease.

Gray said the limited research available on the subject suggests that such children tend to

be deficient in calories, protein and certain vitamins and minerals, although it is unclear whether the deficiency results from the disease itself or from a substandard diet.

Ultimately, Gray and Holbrook hope that correcting the deficiency may alleviate problems the children have with growth and development, and possibly make them more resistant to other sickle cell complications. Presenting the \$60,593 check

to fund the study were a number of McDonald's representatives, including Bill Pretty and Wes Elam, McDonald's licensees in the Raleigh/Durham area; Bill Freelove, a McDonald's licensee from Greenville and president of the regional McDonald's cooperative; and Charles Crump, director of field service, McDonald's Corporation, Raleigh Region.

## Frostbite's Symptoms Are Severe

Durham, NC--Most of the time, when it stops hurting, you're getting better. But when the winter winds blow and the sense of feeling leaves your fingers or toes, it could be a warning sign of frostbite.

Exposure to cold can dull sensations and, if lengthy, cause ice crystals to form in tissue, a condition commonly known as frostbite, according to Dr. David Knapp, assistant medical director of Duke's Emergency Department.

Most cases of frostbite occur on days when the temperature is below 20 degrees F, and the exterior temperature of the body's extremities must fall below 25 degrees F. Your ears, hands, especially fingers, and feet, especially toes, are the most susceptible to frostbite.

The first signs of frostbite are a stinging sensation and blanching as the blood vessels constrict to conserve heat. That's followed by numbness and clumsiness when trying to use the limb. Flesh that takes on a hard or wooden feel indicates frozen tissue. In those cases, seek immediate medical treatment, Knapp said.

Treatment for frostbite depends on the severity of the injury. Severe cases will need a physician's attention. Under no conditions should the frostbitten area be immersed in hot water.

## This Winter... Cold Weather Skin Care

If there is one part of your body that is not fond of winter, it is your skin. Changing temperatures, howling winds and blasting furnaces may cause many of you to experience the itching, flaking and peeling of winter dry skin.

Thomas S. Spencer, Ph.D., dermal research manager for Aveeno skin care products explains that it is primarily the wintery winds and home heating that cause your skin to become dry and itchy by zapping the moisture out of it. "When skin is moist, it moves and stretches easily, but the loss of that moisture can cause your skin to crack, tear, flake and itch," says Dr. Spencer.

But, don't despair. Dr. Spencer offers the following tips that will help you protect your skin from the ravages of winter weather:

- Bundle up with gloves, scarves and heavy socks or stockings to shield your skin from the drying effects of cold winter weather.
- Use a humidifier at home and at the office to boost the relative humidity inside and help your skin retain moisture.
- Don't bathe too often. You should take short, lukewarm showers; lather only those areas where you perspire; use "soap-free" cleansers, and afterwards apply a moisturizing lotion like Aveeno Lotion before all the water evaporates from your skin. If you have severely dry skin, Dr. Spencer suggests limiting bathing to three times a week.
- To combat the drying effects of harsh household cleansers, try applying



ing a lotion to your hands and covering them with cotton-lined rubber gloves before cleaning.

Exercise also can rob your skin of moisture due to perspiration and exposure of your skin to the elements. To keep moisture loss at a minimum, take a brief, lukewarm shower after exercising, lather up only those areas that need it and follow with an application of a hand and body moisturizing lotion. Dr. Spencer adds this is particularly important for swimmers since chlorine is very drying to the skin.

"The misconceptions about dry skin are that it's oil absorption and drinking plenty of water that keep the skin from becoming dry," says Spencer. "But, it's really the water absorbed by the top layers of the skin that makes it supple. This is why you should use moisturizing lotions that work to seal in that moisture."

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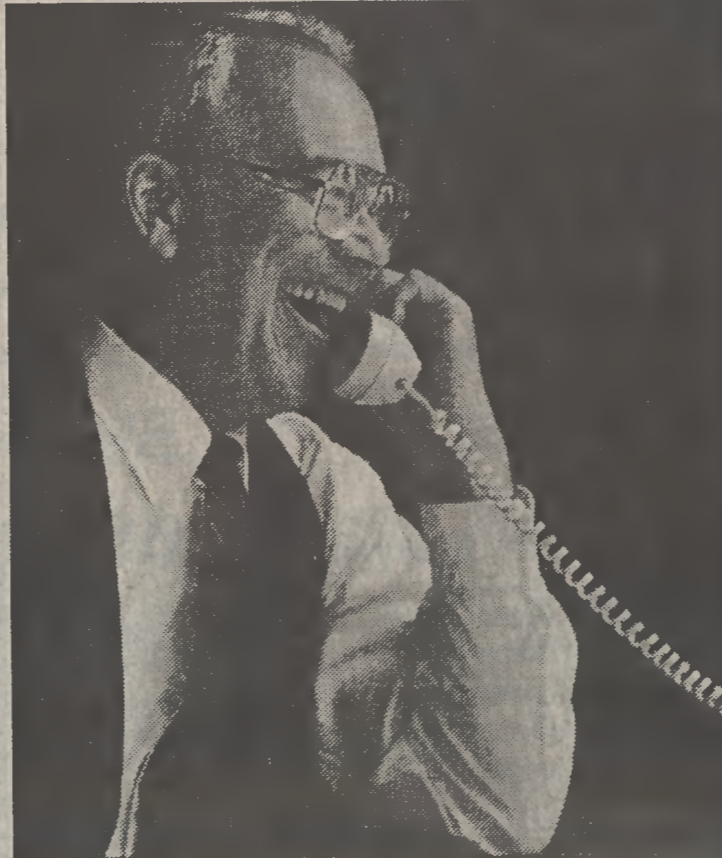
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