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Paediatric and young adult renal cell carcinoma

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Abbreviations	
Renal cell carcinoma	RCC
Translocation renal cell carcinoma	tRCC
Papillary renal cell carcinoma	pRCC
Clear-cell renal cell carcinoma	ccRCC
International Incidence of Childhood Cancer Volume 3	IICC-3
Von Hippel-Lindau	VHL
Mammalian Target of Rapamycin	mTOR
Receptor Tyrosine Kinase	RTK
Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor	VEGF

Platelet Derived Growth Factor	PDGF
Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor Receptor	VEGFR
Radical Nephrectomy	RN
Partial Nephrectomy	PN
Nephron-Sparing Surgery	NSS
Tumour, Node, Metastasis (staging system)	TNM
Randomised Controlled Trial	RCT
The International Society of Paediatric Oncology	SIOP
Wilms Tumour	WT
Children's Oncology Group	COG
Radical Lymph Node Dissection	RLND
Cytoreductive Nephrectomy	CN
Interferon-alpha	IFN- $\alpha$
Interleukin-2	IL-2
Stereotactic Ablative Radiotherapy	SABR
Overall Survival	OS
Progression-free Survival	PFS
Event-free Survival	EFS
Haematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation	HSCT

Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitor	TKI
Checkpoint Inhibitor	CPI
Cytotoxic T-cell Lymphocyte-associated Antigen 4	CTLA-4
Programmed Cell Death Protein 1	PD-1
Programmed Death Ligand 1	PD-L1

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45 **Abstract**

46 Renal cell carcinoma (RCC) is rare in children but is the most common renal tumour in adults.

47 Paediatric RCC has different clinical characteristics, histopathology and treatment compared to

48 adult disease. Databases were reviewed from inception to February 2020 identifying 32 publications

49 pertaining to 350 patients under 27 years. Surgery is the cornerstone for cure in localised RCC.

50 Lymph node dissection remains controversial. Conventional radiotherapy has no curative role in

51 RCC; similarly conventional chemotherapy has not proven to be effective in large cohorts.

52 Paediatric metastatic RCC has a poor outlook. There are no published prospective studies

53 demonstrating which adjuvant therapy could improve outcome. Sunitinib, a tyrosine kinase

54 inhibitor, is recommended in this group despite limited evidence. This review provides an overview

55 for paediatric RCC, including the evolving role of precision medicine.

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60 **Introduction**

61 In Europe, around 1000 children are diagnosed with a malignant renal tumour annually<sup>(1)</sup>. Renal cell  
62 carcinomas (RCC) make up 1.9-6% of all kidney cancers in children<sup>(2-5)</sup>. The international  
63 incidence of childhood cancer volume 3 (IICC-3) shows that the annual incidence of paediatric  
64 RCC is increasing globally, almost doubling, in 0-19 year olds between the 1990s and 2010s  
65 (Supporting Information Figure S1). The relative incidence compared to the much commoner  
66 Wilms tumour (WT) varies with age, such that over half of all paediatric renal tumours are RCC in  
67 14 year olds and RCC remains the predominant renal tumour type after this age<sup>(6)</sup>.

68

69 Despite this global rise, few children die from RCC. In 2013-2015, Public Health England showed  
70 an overall survival (OS) of > 80% in newly diagnosed 13-24 year old RCC patients<sup>(7)</sup>.

71

72 Paediatric RCCs differ significantly from adult counterparts in morphology, genetics, biology and  
73 subtype<sup>(3,5,8,9)</sup>. The molecular basis of RCC classification in children has recently changed to place  
74 more emphasis on the molecular profile. Papillary RCC is rare in adults but the commonest subtype  
75 in younger people. Xp11 and t(6;11) translocation RCC (tRCC) (both of which result in  
76 overexpression of transcription factor genes: TFE3 and TFEB, respectively) are emerging as a more  
77 prevalent subtype in children<sup>(3,5,8-10)</sup>. Papillary RCC and tRCC subtypes are morphologically  
78 distinct. The World Health Organization recommends diagnosis by morphological features together  
79 with immunocytochemistry or fluorescence in situ hybridisation.

80

81 In contrast, clear cell RCC (ccRCC) in patients with Von Hippel-Lindau (VHL) constitutional gene  
82 abnormalities is most common in adults<sup>(5,9)</sup> and tRCCs represent only 15% of RCCs in patients  
83 under 45 years<sup>(11)</sup>. A Swiss study reported only 15% of all RCCs were ccRCC in a group of 41  
84 patients under 22 years<sup>(12)</sup>. Adult ccRCCs often show up-regulation of angiogenic growth factors.  
85 Vascular endothelial growth factor- (VEGF) and platelet derived growth factor (PDGF) receptors

86 are involved in tumour angiogenesis and tumour cell growth allowing for treatment with anti-  
87 angiogenic drugs<sup>(5,13)</sup>. All positive phase 3 trials of these drugs have been restricted to ccRCC  
88 pathology and current limited evidence suggests these drugs are less active in non-ccRCC.

89

90 Subclassification of paediatric and adolescent renal cancers in population based registries is poor, so  
91 distinctions cannot be made at a population level and are only reported in detail in smaller cohorts  
92 registered in clinical trials and studies.

93

94 Paediatric RCC occurs in equal frequency in males and females before the age of 15 years  
95 compared to a male predominance in adults<sup>(2,6,9)</sup>. Additionally, paediatric RCC has been reported in  
96 patients suffering from another underlying disorder<sup>(3,14)</sup> or having undergone prior  
97 chemotherapy<sup>(15)</sup>. A specific subgroup exists as a secondary malignancy following  
98 neuroblastoma<sup>(5,16)</sup> with one reported case of secondary tRCC in a child following  
99 medulloblastoma<sup>(17)</sup>. The IICC-3 reports only 34 out of 1011 (3%) 0-19 year old RCC cases as  
100 secondary cancer suggesting that this is not as common as previously thought<sup>(6)</sup>. In addition, one  
101 review has reported only 12 cases of allograft RCC in children<sup>(18)</sup>.

102

103 Outcomes also appear to differ between children and adults: survival rates in children with regional  
104 lymph node disease without distant metastasis is nearly triple that of adult controls<sup>(8)</sup> implying that  
105 validated treatment in adults cannot be directly extrapolated to children.

106

107 The management of paediatric RCC is still generally based on experience extrapolated from adult  
108 RCC despite their differences, due to the limited evidence base in children. This review seeks to  
109 synthesise the sparse data in the literature that reports on the specific subtypes, treatments and  
110 outcomes of paediatric RCC.

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113

## 114 **Methods**

115 Databases were reviewed from inception to February 2020 using a Boolean search strategy limited  
116 to the English language with full text availability (Supporting Information Table S1).

117 32 relevant publications pertaining to 350 patients under the age of 27 years were identified (Table  
118 1 and Supporting Figure S2). This was extended with citation tracking and co-author suggestions to  
119 include adult data for comparison (Fig. 1).

## 120 **Treatments**

### 121 **1. Nephrectomy**

122 Regardless of subtype, surgery is the cornerstone of therapy for paediatric RCC<sup>(1,2)</sup> as no literature  
123 supports survival benefit from systemic therapy or radiotherapy alone. Localised disease has an  
124 excellent prognosis with surgery alone, whereas metastatic RCC still has poor outcomes, similar to  
125 that in adults<sup>(3,19)</sup>. Completeness of surgical resection and stage of disease are of prognostic  
126 significance.

127

128 RCC is staged using the standardised classification of tumour, lymph node and metastasis  
129 (TNM)<sup>(20)</sup>. Comparisons between paediatric and adult patients are hindered by several paediatric  
130 RCC reviews using modified Robson staging<sup>(21)</sup>.

131



132 Nephron-sparing surgery/partial nephrectomy (NSS/PN) is established in adult stage T1 RCC<sup>(5,22,23)</sup>.  
133 A meta-analysis comparing PN with radical nephrectomy (RN) for renal tumours  $\geq 7$ cm found that  
134 although PN preserved renal function, there was a higher surgical complication rate and no  
135 difference in cancer-specific survival<sup>(24)</sup>. A prospective randomised controlled trial (RCT) by the  
136 European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer compared RN versus PN in adults  
137 with tumours  $< 5$ cm (and no nodal or metastatic disease). This study showed that NSS was safe with  
138 low rates of progression or cancer related death<sup>(25)</sup>. The study closed early due to poor accrual and  
139 had no quality of life or renal function outcomes. There was no evidence of superiority or non-  
140 inferiority for PN versus RN.

141

142 Adult data suggests overall non-cancer-related survival is directly related to total nephric function  
143 necessitating consideration of PN<sup>(26)</sup>, however this data has not been reproduced in paediatrics.  
144 Evolving nephron sparing techniques (robotic surgery, radiofrequency ablation and cryotherapy)  
145 may improve future outcomes.

146

147 PN in paediatric RCC has been reported in small cohorts<sup>(5,27)</sup>. An adolescent with bilateral RCC  
148 treated with PN showed stable disease at follow-up<sup>(28)</sup>. A retrospective study of paediatric renal  
149 tumours including 3 RCC cases showed no significant differences between hospital charges,  
150 hospital length of stay and complication rates between PN and RN; however, no data on oncological  
151 outcomes were reported<sup>(29)</sup>.

152

153 Prospective data and RCTs are not available for PN in paediatric RCC. A single institution study  
154 revealed no difference between RN and PN when comparing oncological outcomes<sup>(27)</sup>.

155

156 The International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP) has reported recurrence of cancer in the  
157 contralateral kidney, particularly in those with underlying conditions, which, in addition to  
158 preservation of renal function, may make PN a preferable option<sup>(5)</sup>.

159

160 Management of paediatric patients presenting with suspected WT includes neoadjuvant cytotoxic  
161 chemotherapy, RN and lymph node sampling and resection<sup>(5)</sup>. Atypical presentations felt unlikely  
162 to be WT are managed differently, generally with national panel discussions. A collaborative study  
163 reviewed the diagnostic accuracy of renal tumour biopsy to prevent over- or under-treatment in  
164 these patients. Biopsy was found to be less effective, when comparing to central pathology review  
165 nephrectomy diagnoses, at identifying non-WTs compared to WTs and rarely changed management  
166 in children<sup>(30)</sup>.

167

168 In Europe, children  $\geq 7$  years of age, or younger children with diagnostic features inconsistent with  
169 WT undergo biopsy (infants undergo nephrectomy)<sup>(30)</sup>. In the USA, the Children's Oncology Group  
170 (COG) recommends upfront surgery. Most children with a diagnosis of RCC will therefore be post-  
171 nephrectomy<sup>(5)</sup>.

172 As yet, there is no evidence favouring one approach over the other but the best method could be  
173 answered by transatlantic collaboration.

174

175

176

## 177 **2. Radical Lymph Node Dissection (RLND)**

178 The role of RLND is controversial and there is little evidence regarding efficacy in adult or  
179 paediatric RCC<sup>(5)</sup>. Geller's group reported nearly 90% of patients with tRCC and lymph node

180 involvement (N+M0) were disease free at a median follow-up of 4.4 years without adjuvant  
181 therapy<sup>(8,31)</sup>. All patients had varying degrees of RLND. European data also suggests improved  
182 overall survival with RLND<sup>(32,33)</sup>.

183

184 The first national, prospective paediatric RCC study including 120 patients with unilateral RCC  
185 showed that lymph node disease was common in patients with small primary tumours and failure to  
186 sample lymph nodes resulted in incomplete staging and potential suboptimal disease control<sup>(34)</sup>.

187 The AREN0321 study included 68 patients with RCC under 30 years. Four-year event-free survival  
188 (EFS) and OS for those that had disease clearance at diagnosis was 87.2% and 94.6%, respectively.

189 Within that group, 15 out of 16 patients with nodal-spread only, had complete resection including

190 RLND and their 4-year EFS and OS was 87.5% and 93.8%, respectively. Although non-

191 randomised, this study showed favourable outcomes in completely resected RCC independent of

192 adjuvant therapy, even in cases of locally advanced disease or lymph node involvement<sup>(35)</sup>.

193

194

195 However, most renal tumours are suspected of being WT which does not involve extensive RLND

196 upfront. In COG and SIOP protocols lymph node sampling is advised in all tumour nephrectomies.

197 There is no strong evidence for the value of secondary lymph node resection based on suspicious

198 lymph nodes on imaging postoperatively. Estrada reported one patient undergoing secondary lymph

199 node dissection based upon residual RCC detected by positron-emission tomography-avid

200 lymphadenopathy and reported no evidence of disease 9 months after nephrectomy<sup>(36)</sup>.

201

202 A recent analysis of a large international cohort suggested RLND was not associated with improved

203 oncological outcomes in node positive, metastasis negative adult RCC<sup>(37)</sup>. European guidelines for

204 adults state that RLND does not offer survival advantage in lymph node negative disease (cN0) and  
205 does not improve oncological outcomes in patients with local, nodal disease (cN1)<sup>(38)</sup>.

206

207 In conclusion, there is emerging evidence of the benefit of RLND in paediatric RCC and this should  
208 be considered in contrast to the suggested lack of benefit in adult RCC.

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210

211

## 212 **Management of Unresectable Tumours and Metastatic RCC**

213 Nephrectomy is the standard of care in low stage tumours and has good outcomes. Advanced stage  
214 disease still has poor outcome and this section describes therapeutic options.

### 215 **(a) Surgery**

216 Although controversial, cytoreductive nephrectomy (CN) to reduce tumour burden may result in a  
217 survival benefit regardless of systemic treatment in some adult patients<sup>(34)</sup>. CN improved outcomes  
218 (including OS) in patients with metastatic RCC receiving interferon-alpha (IFN- $\alpha$ )<sup>(39)</sup>.

219

220 However, a recent prospective phase 3 RCT compared outcomes between patients with metastatic  
221 RCC treated with sunitinib alone or sunitinib and CN. Although not statistically significant, there  
222 was a trend towards superior survival in those who did not undergo CN suggesting that CN may not  
223 add benefit in all metastatic RCC patients receiving immediate systemic therapy. Results should be  
224 interpreted with caution as it was a non-inferiority study, closing early due to non-accrual.

225 Furthermore, it is likely that this study was subject to selection bias, as investigators only included  
226 patients in whom the predicted benefit of CN was uncertain<sup>(40)</sup>.

227

228 Metastasectomy in the era of targeted therapies still has little data with generally small studies  
229 reporting outcomes. A retrospective observational study in adults with predominantly ccRCC  
230 showed improved survival with metastasectomy with or without the additional use of targeted  
231 therapy<sup>(41)</sup>. No data on cancer-specific survival was recorded nor was there information on  
232 completeness of surgical resection.

233

234 In metastatic disease, lymph node sampling but not dissection, is recommended where there are  
235 large lymph nodes and adjuvant drug therapy with sunitinib is considered, as this approach has the  
236 largest evidence base<sup>(42-45)</sup>. Secondary metastasectomy is recommended if there is detectable  
237 remaining disease<sup>(5)</sup>.

238

### 239 **(b) Radiotherapy**

240 RCC is considered to be relatively radioresistant and, conventionally, radiotherapy is limited to the  
241 palliative setting. In adults, stereotactic ablative radiotherapy (SABR) may have a role in treatment  
242 of the primary renal tumour but prospective data is lacking<sup>(46)</sup>. SABR may also have a role in the  
243 treatment of oligometastatic disease post-nephrectomy. A phase 2 RCT in 99 adults with various  
244 cancers showed improved OS for those receiving SABR to limited oligometastatic disease but also  
245 a 4.5% treatment related death. It is unclear if any patients had RCC<sup>(46)</sup>.

246

### 247 **(c) Immunotherapy**

248 Interleukin-2 (IL-2) and IFN- $\alpha$  were in common use for nearly 3 decades but have now been  
249 superseded by targeted therapies to treat metastatic RCC in adults. IL-2 sustains a T-cell response  
250 whereas IFN- $\alpha$  activates dendritic cells and possibly has a direct effect on tumour cells<sup>(47,48)</sup>.

251

252 There are reports of successful treatment with IL-2 in metastatic paediatric RCC<sup>(43,49-51)</sup> although  
253 numbers are small. Benefit of consolidating surgery with IL-2 has been suggested in highly selected  
254 adult populations almost exclusively with ccRCC<sup>(52,53)</sup>. Recent data in these patients shows median  
255 OS with IL-2 alone of 64.5 months in favourable risk patients, 57.6 months in intermediate risk and  
256 14 months in poor risk. Two year survival for the same risk groups was 73.4%, 63.7% and 39.8%  
257 respectively<sup>(54)</sup>.

258

259 Immune checkpoint inhibitors (CPIs) target cytotoxic T-cell lymphocyte-associated antigen 4  
260 (CTLA-4) and programmed death 1/ligand (PD-1/PD-L1) pathways in immune activation against  
261 tumours.

262 A phase 3 trial in adults with metastatic ccRCC, showed significant improvement in OS and fewer  
263 adverse effects with nivolumab (anti-PD-1) compared to everolimus<sup>(55)</sup>.

264 Nivolumab in combination with ipilimumab (anti-CTLA-4) was approved for adults with advanced  
265 RCC after phase 3 trials showed improved OS when compared to TKI monotherapy with  
266 sunitinib<sup>(56,57)</sup>.

267 A phase 3 trial in previously untreated adults with advanced ccRCC demonstrated a median PFS of  
268 15.1 months with pembrolizumab (anti-PD-1) plus axitinib (TKI) compared to a median PFS of  
269 11.1 months with sunitinib alone. OS was also significantly longer in the combination therapy arm  
270 independent of disease risk groups and PD-L1 expression<sup>(58)</sup>.

271 Another phase 3 trial in the same demographic showed avelumab (anti-PD-L1) in combination with  
272 axitinib resulted in a significantly longer PFS compared to sunitinib alone, regardless of PD-L1  
273 expression<sup>(59)</sup>.

274 CPIs in combination with TKIs are now recommended as first-line therapy for adults with  
275 metastatic ccRCC<sup>(60)</sup>.  
276 CPIs have been tested in early phase trials in paediatric solid tumours<sup>(61–63)</sup> showing safety,  
277 tolerability and variable clinical efficacy. A single case of a 15 year old with tRCC showed some  
278 response to 5<sup>th</sup> line nivolumab<sup>(64)</sup>. There is currently a clinical trial recruiting children with tRCC to  
279 compare nivolumab alone and nivolumab plus axitinib based on data from the adult population that  
280 axitinib alone is not preferred due to more encouraging data regarding PD-1 targeted therapy<sup>(65)</sup>.  
281  
282 Immunotherapy may have a role in paediatric RCC but larger studies with carefully selected patient  
283 groups are warranted.

284

#### 285 **(d) Haematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT)**

286 HSCT is a rescue therapy used to treat various paediatric solid tumours<sup>(66,67)</sup>.

287

288 In adults, HSCT has been used in metastatic RCC. One study reported 9 out of 19 adults with  
289 almost exclusively metastatic ccRCC alive between 287 to 831 days after HSCT<sup>(68)</sup>.

290 Although a single case reported a 2-year-old with papillary RCC demonstrating PFS of 5.7 years  
291 after HSCT<sup>(69)</sup>, there is no strong evidence for HSCT in metastatic paediatric RCC.

292

#### 293 **(e) Cytotoxic Chemotherapy**

294 RCC has an intrinsic resistance to conventional chemotherapy<sup>(19,70)</sup>. However, an aggressive  
295 subtype, more prevalent in sickle-cell patients, is renal medullary carcinoma. This subtype has been  
296 shown to have an excellent short-term response to conventional chemotherapy in adolescents<sup>(71)</sup>.

297

298 Collecting duct carcinoma, a subtype reported more frequently in adults shares an overlapping  
299 immunohistochemical profile with renal medullary carcinoma. Modest activity has been reported in  
300 adults with collecting duct carcinoma<sup>(72)</sup>. Gurrera reported a case of collecting duct carcinoma in an  
301 11-year old boy and described only 8 further reported cases in the literature<sup>(73)</sup>.

302

303 This tumour subtype is so rare that even a transcontinental RCT would be impossible, however a  
304 carefully collected international data set may help answer the question of efficacy of conventional  
305 chemotherapy in younger patients.

306

307

#### 308 **(f) TKIs**

309 Single agent TKIs have now been superseded by combination therapies with CPIs for frontline  
310 treatment of metastatic RCC in adults<sup>(60)</sup>. In paediatric RCC, single agent TKIs are used and  
311 currently there are no studies published of combined CPI and TKI therapy.

312

313 Sunitinib, a multi-targeted TKI which inhibits several growth factor receptors<sup>(74,75)</sup> is approved for  
314 adult RCC.

315

316 One report including children and adults with Xp11 tRCC showed improved PFS with sunitinib  
317 compared to cytokine therapy alone (8.2 months vs. 2 months). Additionally, 50% of the cohort  
318 treated with sunitinib showed partial or complete responses<sup>(44)</sup>. One predominantly adult series with  
319 6 patients with metastatic tRCC reported at least stable disease in 5 and disease progression in 1<sup>(76)</sup>.



320 A case report showed stable disease at 2 years in a paediatric patient with relapsed metastatic tRCC  
321 after treatment with sunitinib<sup>(45)</sup>.

322 In adults with metastatic ccRCC, a phase 3 trial of pazopanib, a third generation TKI, showed  
323 similar efficacy to sunitinib but with better safety and quality of life outcomes<sup>(77)</sup>.

324

325 Axitinib as second line therapy in adult ccRCC showed significantly longer PFS compared to  
326 sorafenib (TKI) in a phase 3 RCT<sup>(78)</sup>. A retrospective analysis of 24 children with RCC who  
327 received various systemic agents, 11 of whom had advanced stage disease, demonstrated the mean  
328 time to progression was longest with axitinib or sunitinib warranting further study of these two  
329 therapies<sup>(79)</sup>.

330

331 Prospective data on the best adjuvant therapy in paediatric RCC is lacking. Novel therapies are  
332 promising but early phase trials in paediatric patients and appropriately powered phase 3 trials are  
333 needed.

334

### 335 **(g) mTOR inhibitors: Everolimus**

336 mTOR is involved in the growth and proliferation of malignant cells<sup>(80)</sup> and inhibitors are used in  
337 adult RCC. Argani P. showed increased expression of phosphorylated S6 in Xp11 tRCC and  
338 suggested the mammalian target of rapamycin (mTOR) pathway as a possible therapeutic target<sup>(81)</sup>.

339 A phase 2 RCT in pre-treated adults with advanced stage ccRCC showed a PFS of 14.6 months  
340 with everolimus plus lenvatinib (multi-kinase inhibitor) compared to 5.5 months with everolimus  
341 alone<sup>(82)</sup>. Everolimus is now mainly used in licensed combination with lenvatinib in adults.

342

343 Prior to this, large trials in pre-treated adults with metastatic ccRCC had shown modest benefit in  
344 PFS with everolimus alone<sup>(83,84)</sup>, with a phase 4 trial also demonstrating improved OS<sup>(84)</sup>.

345

346 In adults with metastatic non-ccRCC, a phase 2 RCT showed a PFS of 8.3 months with sunitinib  
347 versus 5.6 months with everolimus. Treatment effect varied based on histological subtype and there  
348 was a trend towards everolimus being specifically active in chromophobe RCC<sup>(85)</sup>.

349

350 mTOR inhibitors are approved in some paediatric tumours. Efficacy has been reported in  
351 children<sup>(86)</sup> and adults<sup>(87)</sup> with RCC although these patients also had tuberous sclerosis, which  
352 probably reflects the fact that mTOR is downstream of tuberous sclerosis complex-1 (TSC1).

353

354 Data for mTOR inhibition in paediatric RCC is scarce and trials in a similar vein to the adult  
355 population could help establish their role.

356

357

#### 358 **(h) MET-TKIs**

359 Tivantinib and savolitinib are selective MET inhibitors. A study in tRCC has shown the MET  
360 receptor tyrosine kinase gene as being the most up-regulated RTK<sup>(5,88)</sup>, thereby allowing for  
361 potential therapies through MET inhibition. Tivantinib showed limited response in a phase 2 trial  
362 and savolitinib has been used against papillary RCC in a phase 2 trial suggesting activity limited to  
363 patients with MET aberrations<sup>(5,89,90)</sup>.

364

365 Cabozantinib has multiple properties including MET inhibition. Phase 1 trials for cabozantinib have  
366 been undertaken<sup>(91)</sup> with phase II trials underway<sup>(92)</sup>. Efficacy has been proven in adults with  
367 advanced RCC although the precise role of MET in this setting is unknown.

368

369 Cabozantinib is approved for second or third line therapy in adult patients and, more recently, as  
370 first line treatment for those with intermediate or poor prognosis. A phase 3 trial in adults with  
371 advanced ccRCC demonstrated a median PFS more than double with cabozantinib compared to  
372 everolimus regardless of prior therapy with tolerable adverse effects<sup>(93)</sup>. Another study in pre-  
373 treated adults with metastatic RCC reported a median PFS of 12.5 months and a 12-month OS of  
374 70.4% in patients subsequently treated with cabozantinib<sup>(94)</sup>. An Italian study with a similar  
375 demographic showed median PFS of 8 months with cabozantinib<sup>(95)</sup>.

376 A phase 2 trial in previously untreated adults with metastatic ccRCC compared first line systemic  
377 therapies. Median PFS was reported as 8.6 months with cabozantinib compared to 5.3 months with  
378 sunitinib<sup>(96)</sup>.

379

380 The first published data of cabozantinib in paediatric RCC involved 2 patients with recurrent tRCC  
381 and both cases expressed MET. Disease control was achieved for over 15 months<sup>(97)</sup>.

382

383 Evidence for selective MET-TKIs is lacking and initial studies are disappointing. Newer multi-  
384 targeted agents are promising.

385

386

387 **Discussion**

388 Advances in the treatment of adult RCC have formed the basis of paediatric studies. An altered  
389 approach to initial investigation to include screening for biomarkers could improve diagnosis and  
390 management.

391 Transgenic mice studies suggest microRNA in urinary exosomes have the potential for use as a  
392 biomarker in patients with Xp11 tRCC<sup>(98)</sup>. It is hoped that other tumour subtypes could utilise  
393 similar approaches.

394

395 Identification of distinct subtypes highlights the importance of a precision medicine approach.

396 Stratified Medicine Paediatrics is a UK research study looking at genetic changes in paediatric  
397 tumours allowing for treatment of actionable mutations. Similar initiatives are established in other  
398 European countries and North America.

399

400 Localised RCC is curable with surgery alone. Advanced RCC still carries a dismal prognosis  
401 however this has been improved with adjuvant therapy and this should now be considered as  
402 standard.

403 The efficacy of immunotherapy remains uncertain whilst the efficacy and choice of best second line  
404 TKIs are unknown in paediatric RCC. Despite novel targeted therapies in adult RCC, predictive  
405 biomarkers of response have not been thoroughly investigated in paediatrics and prospective studies  
406 are still lacking.

407 Although RCC in adults and children are two ends of a disease spectrum, physicians and  
408 researchers in both sectors should continue close collaboration to improve outcomes for their  
409 patients.

410 The rarity and complexity of paediatric RCC, the documented rising incidence and poor outlook in  
411 advanced disease highlights the need for international collaboration.

#### 412 **Conflict of Interest Statement**

413 There are no conflicts of interest.

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### **Figure Legends**

Figure 1. Methodology flow chart.

### **Table Legends**

Table 1. Paediatric renal cell carcinoma patient characteristics

### **Supporting Information Legends**

Supporting Information Figure S1 - Age-standardised rate per million of renal tumours from 1996 to 2010. Adapted from Nakata K and IICC-3 Contributors (2020). Incidence of childhood renal tumours: an international population-based study. *Int J Cancer*. DOI://doi.org/10.1002/ijc.33147

Supporting Information Table S1 – Search strategies on all databases

Supporting Information S2 – Supplement to table 1 for details regarding patient characteristics