

Radiation seeds effectively cure prostate cancer in young men

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Radiation seed implants (brachytherapy) are just as effective at curing prostate cancer in younger men (aged 60 and younger) as they are in older men, according to a study presented at a scientific session on October 31, 2007, at the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology's 49th Annual Meeting in Los Angeles.

Brachytherapy is a minimally invasive procedure where a radiation oncologist places small radioactive seeds into the prostate in order to kill the cancer cells. It is an attractive treatment option for patients with prostate cancer because it has a much shorter recovery time than surgery and studies have shown brachytherapy to be just as effective as surgery.

However, surgeons have usually advised younger men to undergo surgery to remove all or part of the prostate (prostatectomy) over other treatments like seed implants because they believed younger men could physically tolerate surgery, plus they believed surgery was more effective than brachytherapy at curing prostate cancer long term. This meant that many younger men would undergo surgery without ever learning about other treatment options, like brachytherapy or external beam radiation therapy.

"These results suggest that brachytherapy is extremely effective in curing localized prostate cancer for men aged 60 and younger. When younger men are diagnosed with localized prostate cancer, they should be presented with all viable treatment options, including brachytherapy," said Alice Ho, M.D., the lead author of the study and a radiation oncologist at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. "Every man with prostate cancer, regardless of his age, should have access to the treatment that is best for his cancer and lifestyle."

The large, retrospective study examined the outcomes of more than 1,700 men with localized

prostate cancer who were treated with brachytherapy between 1990 and 2005 at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York. Results show that younger men had the same excellent outcomes after undergoing brachytherapy as older patients.

Source: American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology

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