

Targeted radiation shows promise in early breast cancer

March 10 2016



(HealthDay)—For women with early-stage breast cancer, targeted doses

of radiation therapy may be as effective as standard radiation treatment of the entire breast, according to research presented at the European Breast Cancer Conference, held from March 9 to 11 in Amsterdam.

The researchers behind the new study randomly assigned 2,018 women with [breast cancer](#) in the United Kingdom to undergo one of three [radiation therapy](#) approaches after having small cancerous tumors surgically removed. Two of the approaches focused the radiation around the tumor, exposing the rest of the breast to little or no radiation.

The researchers found that three weeks of partial breast radiation therapy produced fewer side effects but seemed just as effective as whole breast radiation over five years. Besides very low rates of relapse among all three groups, the rate of side effects from the target therapy was minimal.

The research only tracked women for five years, so it isn't definitive. Still, "this contributes to a growing body of evidence that a large proportion of women over 50 years old with small breast cancers can avoid whole breast radiotherapy," study coauthor John Yarnold, M.B.B.S., a professor of clinical oncology with the Institute of Cancer Research in London, told *HealthDay*.

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Citation: Targeted radiation shows promise in early breast cancer (2016, March 10) retrieved 12 April 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-03-early-breast-cancer.html>

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