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NEWSFEED

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First patient treated using Oncentra GYN

6 February 2009 - Last week the Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust (ACT) announced that Addenbrooke's Hospital was the first hospital to purchase and use Oncentra GYN, the commercial version of Nucletron's brachytherapy treatment planning solution for gynecologic cancers. The first patient was treated last week. Their decision to use Oncentra GYN was based on the ability to offer significant improvement of efficiency in tumor targeting, while reducing the risk of side-effects. This solution for brachytherapy treatment planning will be implemented in multiple centers around the globe in 2009.

Charitable funds have enabled Addenbrooke's Hospital to be the first hospital in the world to purchase the commercial version of a groundbreaking new software for planning brachytherapy treatment, a type of radiotherapy used to treat cervical cancer.

The new computer-based software called Oncentra GYN, developed by medical device company Nucletron in partnership with the Medical University of Vienna's Department of Radiotherapy, enables radiotherapists to plan targeted treatment for cervical cancers to improve cure rates while reducing side-effects. Addenbrooke's, in conjunction with Nucletron, are planning workshops to share any knowledge learnt with fellow oncology professionals round the country.

Addenbrooke's has already partially implemented the 'Vienna technique', which significantly improves the ability to deliver high radiation doses to the tumor while limiting the damage to the surrounding healthy tissues in the pelvis. Early experience at Addenbrooke's has shown a 100% cure rate for patients with small tumors without increasing side-effects. The new software will now allow Addenbrooke's to treat large tumors (greater than 5 cm in size) which have spread outside the cervix. Trials in Vienna have shown that the techniques supported by the new software can improve cure rates for patients with large cervical tumors by 20% (to 90%) while reducing debilitating side-effects by 10% (to 2%). The new software should also speed up the process for planning the patient's treatment.

Dr Li Tee Tan, Consultant Oncologist at Addenbrooke's, is very enthusiastic about this exciting and innovative new software. Nationally, only 25% of oncology centers are offering this 3D 'image-guided' technique due to its complexity, and the new software should simplify the implementation of the technique. Addenbrooke's are therefore working with Nucletron and colleagues from Vienna to carry out teaching workshops over the next year to share their knowledge with fellow oncology professionals around the country.

Dr Li Tee Tan said: "We are very grateful for the charitable funding that has enabled this revolutionary new technology to be implemented at Addenbrooke's, not only from Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust funds but also from external bodies including Jo's Trust, Huntingdon Audi and Peterborough Cancer Treatment Appeal, who have all recognized the life-changing benefits of this software for patients with cervical cancer and have very generously awarded funds to Addenbrooke's towards its purchase."

Patient, Polly Noble, was diagnosed with the disease in 2005 at the age 24, and further to radiotherapy, chemotherapy and brachytherapy treatment at Addenbrooke's, she is now well. She describes the brachytherapy treatment as a very uncomfortable process but knows that she would not be where she is now if she hadn't had the treatment, as cervical cancer cannot be cured without it. She says "If they've improved the way the treatment is done that's brilliant."

About brachytherapy

Brachytherapy is an advanced cancer treatment. Radioactive seeds or sources are placed in or near the tumor itself, giving a high radiation dose to the tumor while reducing the radiation exposure in the surrounding healthy tissues. The term "brachy" is Greek for short distance, and brachytherapy is radiation therapy given at a short distance: localized, precise, and high-tech.

Nucletron

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