

23<sup>rd</sup> August 2013

## Patients with prostate cancer don't regret modern radiotherapy

New research from the North Coast Cancer Institute (NCCI) shows that patients who have their prostate cancer treated with modern radiotherapy would happily go through treatment again.

In a recently published article in the International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology and Physics, Professor Tom Shakespeare and his team asked 257 of their prostate cancer patients whether they regretted their radiotherapy and if they would go through it all again.

"We found only 3.8% of patients regretted their choice of treatment, which included modern radiotherapy and hormone treatment. When specifically asked about the radiotherapy component of their treatment, only one in 200 patients (0.5%) would probably not choose radiotherapy again," said Professor Shakespeare.

'Decision regret' is considered an increasingly important patient-centred outcome, reflecting satisfaction with treatment, side-effects experienced, cure rates and quality of life.

'Decision regret' has been evaluated by other Researchers in patients, who have had surgery or older types of radiotherapy for prostate cancer. In these previous studies, up to 53% of patients who had surgery or old radiotherapy live to regret their treatment.

"Since patients are more likely than ever to be cured of their prostate cancer, it is vital that they are happy with their decision in the longer term.

"Patients who have surgery or older types of radiotherapy appear to have much higher levels of regret compared to patients who we have treated with modern radiotherapy techniques, such as intensity modulated radiotherapy (IMRT)," said Professor Shakespeare.

"It is possible that patients may regret surgery, or older types of radiotherapy because of the side-effects and lower rates of cure. Also, some patients may make a decision in a hurry without talking to all of the Specialists.

"The Cancer Council recommends that all patients with newly diagnosed prostate cancer should talk to a Radiation Oncologist. However, many patients are never referred for that discussion. Our research reinforces the need for all patients to consider modern radiotherapy as an excellent choice to cure their prostate cancer," said Professor Shakespeare.

The North Coast Cancer Institute (NCCI) is an Integrated Public Cancer Centre spanning Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour and Lismore on the NSW Mid North and far North Coast. Professor Shakespeare is the lead prostate cancer radiation oncologist for NCCI.