**Preventing prostate cancer death**

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**Combining radiotherapy and hormone therapy in patients with prostate cancer significantly improves men’s survival compared with hormone therapy treatment alone.**

**Results from a large study led by the NCIC Clinical Trials Group located at Queen’s University in Kingston, Canada in collaboration with the UK Medical Research Council (MRC) and Cardiff have just been published in *The Lancet*.**

**Professor Malcolm Mason of the School of Medicine led the UK component of the trial and was joint first author of the *Lancet* publication.**

The randomised controlled trial, known in the UK as PR07, recruited 1,205 men between 1995 and 2005.

The men, predominantly from the UK and Canada, had been diagnosed with locally advanced prostate cancer which had grown outside the surface of the prostate but had not spread further.

Half of the group were treated with hormone therapy, a standard form of drug treatment, and the other half were treated with a combination of the same hormone therapy plus an additional course of radiotherapy.

By providing radiotherapy in addition to hormone therapy, the researchers found that 74 per cent of men were still alive after seven years, compared with 66 per cent who did not receive radiotherapy.

The researchers found that those who received radiotherapy were about half as likely to die from their prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer accounts for 10,000 male deaths in the UK each year and is the second most common cause of cancer death in men, after lung cancer.

The trial was conducted because it was unknown whether radiotherapy would help to extend the lives of men with prostate cancer and reduce their chances of dying from their cancer.

Professor Mason said: "We’re very grateful to all the men who took part in this trial and we’re delighted that the trial has shown radiotherapy to be so worthwhile for patients with the type of prostate cancer we call "locally advanced".

The next stage will be to ensure that the results of this trial are implemented into treatment recommendations as quickly as possible."

Professor Max Parmar, Director of the MRC Clinical Trials Unit, says: "By answering the important question of whether prostate cancer patients would benefit from radiotherapy, we have hopefully altered the way this disease will be treated from now on.

However, with 10,000 men dying from the illness each year in the UK, more must still be done to improve outcomes for patients.

Well-conducted large scale clinical trials such as PR07 are essential to making sure that treatment decisions are based on the best possible evidence.

We need other ongoing studies to be just as well supported."

**Related links**

[The European Cancer Stem Cell Research Institute](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/research/cancerstemcell/)