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Combining hormone therapy and radiotherapy significantly improves survival rates for prostate cancer



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Interim results from a study co-ordinated by the UK Medical Research Council (MRC) and conducted by the NCIC Clinical Trials Group at Queen's University, Ontario, have shown that combining radiotherapy and hormone therapy in patients with high risk prostate cancer significantly improves the survival rate compared with hormone therapy treatment alone.

Researchers from the international collaboration presented their findings ahead of formal publication through an oral presentation at the National Cancer Research Institute Conference in Liverpool.

The randomised controlled trial, known as PRO7, recruited patients between 1995 and 2005 and involved 1,205 patients with aggressive localised prostate cancer from the UK, the USA and Canada. Half were treated with hormone therapy, a standard form of chemotherapy treatment, and the other half were treated with a combination of hormone therapy and radiotherapy.

By providing radiotherapy in addition to hormone therapy the researchers found that there was an improvement in survival levels from prostate cancer from 77 per cent to 85 per cent, ten years after joining the trial.

Professor Max Parmar, Director of the MRC Clinical Trials Unit, says: "*The interim results of this trial are extremely encouraging. The side-effects of radiotherapy are minimal and we are delighted that, through the combined efforts of patients, clinicians and researchers across the world, we are providing robust evidence to demonstrate that radiotherapy can benefit men with high risk prostate cancer.*"

Prostate cancer accounts for around 12 per cent of male deaths from cancer in the UK and is the second most common cause of cancer death in men, after lung cancer.

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