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Radiation Therapy Combo Cures Prostate Cancer Long-term

January 4, 2007 – Seventy-four percent of men treated with a combination of radiation seed implants and external beam radiation therapy for prostate cancer are cured of their disease 15 years following their treatment, according to a study released today in the *International Journal of Radiation Oncology*Biology*Physics*, the official journal of ASTRO.

This study was conducted by the physicians at the Seattle Prostate Institute. Doctors wanted to look at the combination of seed implants and external beam radiation therapy, two different types of radiation therapy, to prolong the long-term disease cure rates for prostate cancer. Over the course of 15 years, doctors followed 232 men with early-stage prostate cancer who received a course of external beam radiation therapy followed by permanent seed implants a few weeks later. Sixty-five percent of these patients had T2b-T3 disease and the entire group had an average pre-treatment PSA of 15 ng/ml.

Seed implants, also called brachytherapy, are small radioactive pellets, each about the size of a grain of rice. The seeds are inserted into the prostate through small needles during a brief outpatient procedure. External beam radiation therapy involves a series of 25 short daily outpatient treatments, where a radiation oncologist precisely directs high energy radiation beams to kill cancer cells.

“This study is exciting because it shows that the combination of brachytherapy and external beam therapy are successful long-term at curing men of their prostate cancer,” said John E. Sylvester, M.D., lead author of the study and the Director of the Seattle Prostate Institute in Seattle. “This is good news for men with prostate cancer since radiation therapy is less invasive, spares healthy tissue and helps patients return to regular activities sooner than surgery.”

For more information about prostate cancer treatment options, please visit www.rtanswers.org. To arrange an interview with Dr. Sylvester or for a copy of the study, “15-Year Biochemical Relapse Free

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Survival in Clinical Stage T1-T3 Prostate Cancer Following Combined External Beam Radiotherapy and Brachytherapy; Seattle Experience,” please contact Julie Barden at 1-800-962-7876 or julieb@astro.org.

ASTRO is the largest radiation oncology society in the world, with more than 8,500 members who specialize in treating patients with radiation therapies. As the leading organization in radiation oncology, biology and physics, the Society is dedicated to the advancement of the practice of radiation oncology by promoting excellence in patient care, providing opportunities for educational and professional development, promoting research and disseminating research results and representing radiation oncology in a rapidly evolving socioeconomic healthcare environment.

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