Erectile Tissue-Sparing Radiation Technique Offers No Additional Preservation of Sexual Function for Men with Prostate Cancer, Study

PHILADELPHIA (September 25, 2017) – In a trial of whether a modified method of radiation therapy for localized prostate cancer would more effectively preserve men’s sexual function, researchers at Fox Chase Cancer Center found no statistically significant benefit. Eddie Zhang, MD, worked with a team that used standard intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) with additional dose-limiting parameters to the penile bulb and corporal bodies, both of which are thought to be involved in erectile function. Of the men who received the erectile tissue-sparing IMRT, 52 percent retained erectile potency at 19-30 months after treatment, compared to 51 percent of men who received standard IMRT. In addition, men in both groups had minimal urinary and bowel symptoms. Zhang will present the study as an oral presentation during the annual meeting of the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO) in San Diego on September 25.

“Although the results showed no significant improvement with erectile tissue-sparing IMRT, it is important that we continue to seek ways to improve and preserve quality of life during and after cancer treatment,” Zhang said.

The study also showed that men who received erectile tissue-sparing IMRT had the same cancer outcomes as men who received standard IMRT, indicating that limiting radiation doses to the penile bulb and corporal bodies is a safe and feasible treatment option.

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