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Assessment of patient-scored normal tissue outcomes of prostate brachytherapy

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Aims: To obtain prospective patient-scored normal tissue outcome data for a cohort of 375 patients treated with I¹²⁵ seed implant to the prostate.

Procedures: From 2000-2006, 375 consecutive patients were recruited to complete pre- and post-treatment questionnaires (LENT-SOMA) to score normal tissue morbidity. The mean age of this cohort was 63 years (range 47-79). After initial interview pre-treatment, patients completed postal questionnaires at 1, 3, 6, 9, 12, 18, 24, 30 and 36 months following brachytherapy. The median follow-up time was 2.00 yrs (range 0.08-5.38 yrs). Compliance was high with 82% completing questionnaires.

Major findings: Dysuria, urgency and frequency were the most frequently reported urinary symptoms pre-treatment; seen in 17%, 50% and 78% of patients respectively. These symptoms increased 1 to 6 months post-treatment. Dysuria and urgency then improved with time to reach pre-treatment levels by 30 months for dysuria and 24 months for urinary urgency. The proportion of patients reporting urinary frequency post-treatment did not change with time; however the severity of symptoms changed. Between 1-6 months post-treatment, patients reported an increase in pain on defaecation and tenesmus. Pain on defaecation improved to pre-treatment levels by 9 months but 30% reported tenesmus at 36 months cf 23% pre-treatment. At 36 months, 88% of patients who chose to answer (n=105), reported difficulty with erections of 68% pre-treatment. This trend was reflected in other questions on libido and frequency of intercourse.

Conclusions: The questionnaire approach was a feasible and acceptable method of obtaining subjective detailed normal tissue outcome data prospectively.