



News briefs

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Radiation therapy uptake falling way below gold standard

Over half of cancer patients would benefit from radiation therapy at some point in the course of their disease, however research due to be presented today (13/11) at a conference of cancer experts shows only 29% of patients are receiving the treatment.

Radiotherapy treatment data were collected from all 17 radiotherapy departments in NSW and ACT for the period January 2004-June 2007. Geographic Information System software was used to calculate the road distance between patients' residential address and the closest radiotherapy treatment department.

Author Dr Gabriel Gabriel, of the Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research in Liverpool, NSW, will tell the Clinical Oncological Society of Australia in Brisbane that there are likely to be several factors behind the low uptake.

"Our research told us that the further a patient lives from a radiotherapy department, the less likely they were to undertake radiotherapy treatment," he said.

"Thankfully since this research, six new radiotherapy centres have opened in NSW, which should help address issues around distance and access to treatment. But we now need research that explores patient preferences and doctors' referrals."

Tuesday, 11-11.15am, Room P3, Brisbane Convention Centre

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