

MEDIA RELEASE

June 2021 - For immediate distribution

Improving pain relief for patients with advanced cancers

A trans-national clinical trial facilitated in Australia and New Zealand by TROG Cancer Research has found stereotactic ablative body radiation therapy (SABR) provides superior relief from painful spinal lesions in comparison to standard radiation therapy.

The CCTG SC.24/TROG 17.06 [SC24 phase II/III trial](#), which had 22 trial sites worldwide including eight across Australia and New Zealand showed SABR was more effective and longer lasting for patients, when it came to relieving pain caused by secondary tumours in the spine.

Radiation therapy is commonly used to relieve the pain of metastases to the spine by shrinking the tumour, which reduces pain and pressure. The study showed that using fewer and higher doses of precisely delivered SABR is more effective than standard treatments, with more participants reporting complete control of pain at the study's endpoint.

TROG members, Associate Professor Shankar Siva of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Victoria and Associate Professor Matthew Foote of Princess Alexandra Hospital in Queensland led the trial in Australia through funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council.

A/Prof. Shankar Siva said the findings were practice-changing and would lead to improved quality of life for many patients with advanced cancers in need of pain relief.

"We know that up to 40 per cent of patients with solid cancers will develop secondaries in the spine - across many different types of cancer - and back pain is a major issue for quality of life," A/Prof Siva said.

"Conventional radiation therapy for pain relief is the current standard-of-care. This trial has shown that SABR - as an advanced form of this treatment - leads to even better pain relief which is more durable than standard radiation therapy."

After three months, 35 per cent of participants randomised to the trial's SABR arm reported no remaining pain from their treated spinal lesions, compared to 14 per cent who received standard radiation therapy. After six months, 32 per cent in the SABR arm reported no pain compared to 16 per cent.

TROG's CEO, Susan Goode said the team was honoured to collaborate with leading health professionals internationally to find a better way to manage and reduce pain for cancer patients through advanced radiation therapy technologies.

"The findings of this study will have a significant impact on the quality of life of patients across the world. We always say that cancer research trials can be life-saving and life-changing to patients today, but also for future generations, and this trial certainly supports that notion."

10 per cent of the total number of participants in the trial were sourced through TROG sites, with Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and Princess Alexandra Hospital being amongst the top 10 accruing sites globally. The last patient had their last study visit during COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 after which the trial was closed. Findings from this important trial were presented at the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) Annual Meeting held virtually in October 2020 with the main results now published in the [Lancet Oncology journal](#).

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For further information and to request interview opportunities, please contact:

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About TROG Cancer Research

TROG (the Trans-Tasman Radiation Oncology Group) is a global leader in cancer research and has been successfully improving the outcomes of cancer patients since 1989.

Our mission is to improve treatments and quality of life for cancer patients, and we do so by working collaboratively. We are one of the largest clinical trial groups in Australia and New Zealand and we work with hospitals, universities, cancer centres and the wider community around the world to conduct life-changing research.

TROG Cancer Research's focus is providing hope to people with all cancer types through one treatment, radiation therapy.

Our research findings have helped advance the way many cancers are treated worldwide.

About the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO)

The American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) is the world's largest radiation oncology society, with more than 10,000 members who are physicians, nurses, biologists, physicists, radiation therapists, dosimetrists and other health care professionals who specialize in treating patients with radiation therapies.

The Society is dedicated to improving patient care through professional education and training, support for clinical practice and health policy standards, advancement of science and research, and advocacy.

ASTRO publishes three medical journals, International Journal of Radiation Oncology • Biology • Physics, Practical Radiation Oncology and Advances in Radiation Oncology; developed and maintains an extensive patient website, RT Answers; and created the nonprofit foundation Radiation Oncology Institute.

To learn more about ASTRO, visit www.astro.org and www.RTAnswers.org.