

Long Term AGH Clinical Trial Endorses Less Invasive Therapy When Breast Cancer Recurs

/PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Treating a breast cancer recurrence with a combination of radioactive seed implantation and tumor excision rather than with mastectomy, or whole breast removal, is an effective approach for many women, according to a long-term study presented today at the annual meeting the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO) by cancer specialists at Allegheny General Hospital (AGH) in Pittsburgh.

The study is one of nine presentations by AGH/West Penn Allegheny Health System physicians and researchers at the ASTRO conference in Miami Beach, FL. Founded in 1958, ASTRO is the largest radiation oncology society in the world with more than 10,000 members committed to advancing the scientific base of radiation therapy and extending the benefits of radiation therapy to patients with cancer and other diseases.

"Our findings add to a growing body of knowledge suggesting that mastectomy can sometimes be avoided when treating women with a breast cancer recurrence," said lead author Mark Trombetta, MD, System Director of Clinical Program Development, Department of Radiation Oncology for West Penn Allegheny Health System (WPAHS).

In the AGH study, twenty-two women with recurrent tumors were offered tumor excision followed by low-dose radiation delivered via seed implants (brachytherapy) as an alternative to mastectomy. Researchers followed them from 17 months to 9 1/2 years (average 5 1/2 years). During that time, the tumor recurred in only one woman, and she was subsequently successfully treated with mastectomy. Long-term cosmetic results were also acceptable as defined by the Harvard Cosmesis Scale and a modification designed by doctors at AGH. A second woman saw a recurrence in the opposite breast, and three others died of systemic disease.

"We look forward to seeing the results of the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group's Phase II clinical trial of repeat breast-conserving surgery and re-irradiation, which should help further define the role of repeat conservation therapy," Dr. Trombetta said.

SOURCE West Penn Allegheny Health System

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