

Hematology-Oncology Associates of CNY

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Hematology-Oncology Associates of CNY Announces Cutting Edge Radiation Trial for Early Stage Breast Cancer Patients

Women who are diagnosed with early stage breast cancer find themselves with treatment options that precipitate a myriad of emotions. Among the alternatives, women are often faced with decisions such as mastectomy vs. lumpectomy with whole breast irradiation. Although numerous studies have shown that breast conservation therapy (BCT) consisting of lumpectomy and whole breast irradiation produces survival rates similar to those of mastectomy for early breast cancer, only 10-40% of the candidates for BCT actually make this selection. For many patients the obvious cosmetic and potential emotional advantages of BCT are outweighed by the inconvenience of undergoing five to seven weeks of radiation therapy in addition to chemotherapy and hormonal therapy. Recent studies indicate that the greatest benefit of radiation therapy after lumpectomy may be to eradicate any tumor cells left behind at the site of the excision, and that radiation therapy to the entire breast may not be necessary to control recurrence.

If an acceptable outcome can be achieved by giving radiation therapy only to the site of excision or tumor bed, the length of time that the patient must undergo treatment can be reduced to one or two weeks. A shortened treatment schedule

would decrease healthcare costs and decrease the burden of care for women undergoing BCT – thus making it a viable option for more women.

As the only Clinical Community Oncology Program (CCOP) in all of New York State except Long Island, Hematology-Oncology Associates of CNY is proud to announce their participation in what may be another ground breaking clinical trial – Does partial breast irradiation provide effective local tumor control for women who have had a lumpectomy for early stage breast cancer?

In conjunction with the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project (NSABP) and the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group (RTOG), this study is looking to enroll 3,000 patients nationwide. Women entering this study must have stage 0 (DCIS), or stage I or II invasive adenocarcinoma of the breast with no evidence of metastatic disease. With a stage II diagnosis the tumor size must be 3 centimeters or less. Women must have undergone a lumpectomy with the margins of the resected specimen histologically free of cancer including DCIS. For patients with positive axillary nodes, eligibility is restricted to those with 0 to 3 positive axillary nodes.

Patients will be randomized to receive either whole breast irradiation or one of three partial breast irradiation techniques in accordance with the physician's discretion and facility credentialing. Chemotherapy, if given, is administered before whole breast irradiation and following partial breast irradiation.

Currently, Hematology-Oncology Associates is credentialed to perform 3D conformal external beam radiation as the partial breast irradiation technique. If interested in participating or finding out more information about this study, please contact the Research Department at HOACNY by calling 472-7504 or checking out www.hoacny.com.

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