

Radiotherapy Board

STATEMENT ON THE INTRABEAM RADIOTHERAPY SYSTEM FOR ADJUVANT TREATMENT OF EARLY BREAST CANCER

The Radiotherapy Board¹ has noted with concern the decision by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to dismiss an appeal by The Royal College of Radiologists (RCR), Independent Cancer Patients' Voices and the Royal College of Physicians to reconsider its guidance around the use of Intrabeam radiotherapy for treating patients with early breast cancer.

The Radiotherapy Board had earlier [added its voice](#) to the concerns raised by all three of its constituent professional bodies - the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine, the RCR and the Society and College of Radiographers – about the proposed recommendations for the use of Intrabeam. It had emphasised in particular the absence of five-year follow up data – the nationally accepted gold standard for NHS commissioning – with which to assess this technique and had urged NICE to defer any decision on the use of Intrabeam until these data were available.

Mr John Burton, Chair of the Radiotherapy Board, commented: “Notwithstanding the outcome of the appeal, the Radiotherapy Board welcomes the fact that Intrabeam will not be part of routine commissioning. Its use will be restricted to only those machines that are already available and in conjunction with NHS England specified clinical governance, data collection and submission arrangements”.

The Radiotherapy Board supports the need for openness with patients about the limits of the evidence around Intrabeam and the importance of ensuring that any patient who is being considered for this therapy is fully informed of the potential risks involved. It would also welcome the completion and publication in peer reviewed journals of current research into the use of intra-operative radiotherapy (IORT) as a form of cancer treatment and the conduct of further robust and high-quality research into IORT in the future. This would help to contribute to the continuing development of world-class radiotherapy services for cancer patients in the UK.

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¹ The Radiotherapy Board was established in 2013 by The Royal College of Radiologists, the Society and College of Radiographers and the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine to provide guidance, oversight and support for the continuing development of high-quality radiotherapy services for cancer patients in the UK. It has representation from across the four UK nations and from other organisations closely involved in radiotherapy services.