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JCMC offers new radiotherapy for prostate patients

Doctors at Jersey City Medical Center are now offering a form of radiotherapy called prostate seed implantation or brachytherapy for men suffering from prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer affecting men. There are about 200,000 new cases a year in the United States.

According to Dr. Yale Shulman, who performed the first cases at Jersey City Medical Center with Dr. Perry Williams, "With brachytherapy, we meticulously place radioactive pellets or seeds under precise ultrasound control, into the prostate to eradicate the can-

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cer. The treatment is well tolerated and is performed on an outpatient basis."

Before the seeds are implanted, the patient receives anesthesia. Needles containing the seeds are then inserted through the skin of the perineum (the area between the scrotum and anus) using ultrasound guidance.

"The seeds remain in the prostate, where the radioactive material gives off localized

radiation for a number of months to destroy the prostate cancer," said Dr. Shulman, a board certified urologist who is a Clinical Associate Professor of Urology at New York University Medical Center and a Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery - Urology at UMDNJ (Newark). "No surgical incision is required and there is a short recovery time. Patients can usually return to work and normal activities within several days."

Brachytherapy is considered an option for patients with localized (organ-confined) prostate cancer. New advances in seed technology have made available versions of seeds that allow doctors to securely place them at the border of and adjacent to the prostate to treat cancer that might have extended to the surrounding tissue.

"Brachytherapy gives our patients a minimally invasive and effective option to surgery," said Dr. Williams, a radiation oncologist, who

did his fellowship and residency training at Montefiore Medical Center and serves as a Clinical Assistant Professor at UMDNJ. "Published 12-year data show disease-free survival rates with brachytherapy to be as high as 93 per cent."

Both doctors have extensive experience and training in brachytherapy. The four patients who were treated were released shortly following the procedure. □