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Targeted head and neck radiotherapy could improve quality of life

Date:

15 June 2016

Changing the intensity of radiotherapy to protect the salivary glands could help treat a rare type of head and neck cancer and improve patients' day-to-day lives, a new study shows

Scientists at The Institute of Cancer Research found that in 36 patients with head and neck cancer of unknown origin, a radiotherapy technique called intensity modulated radiotherapy (IMRT) was as effective as conventional radiotherapy at preventing the return of the disease.

The study was funded by Cancer Research UK, with additional support from the Biomedical Research Centre and The Royal Marsden.

Scientists treated 36 patients with head and neck cancer of unknown origin, using IMRT to reduce radiation delivered to the salivary glands. They observed that avoiding giving a high dose of radiotherapy to the salivary glands helped prevent side-effects after treatment which impact on patients' quality of life, while two years after treatment, 90% of patients were disease free and four years later, still had good control of their disease.

[Find out more here](#) ^[5].

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