

Simultaneous Radiotherapy, Chemo Better For Breast Cancer.

Bloomberg News (9/25, Bennett) reported that according to a study by University of Birmingham, UK, oncology professor Indrajit Fernando, a trial of nearly 2,300 early stage breast cancer patients found that "giving breast-cancer patients chemotherapy and radiation at the same time reduced the risk of tumors recurring by 35 percent." These findings contradict earlier "trials that failed to find a benefit and may change the way the tumor-fighting techniques are used."

According to Reuters (9/25, Kelland), this dual treatment is known as synchronous chemo radiation, and the study found that the dual approach yielded limited side effects and didn't reduce patient quality of life.

Medscape (9/26, Chustecka) notes that usually following surgery, "breast cancer patients undergo chemotherapy first and radiotherapy second" rather than simultaneously. This new study, known as the Sequencing of Chemotherapy and Radiotherapy in Adjuvant Breast Cancer (SECRAB) study, had "a median follow-up of 8.8 years."

MedPage Today (9/26, Bankhead) reports that over five years the incidence of recurrence "was 2.8 percent with synchronous therapy, with radiation during or between cycles of chemotherapy, and 5.1 percent among women who received adjuvant chemotherapy followed by radiotherapy," and having "synchronous therapy also shortened the overall duration of treatment."