Prostate Cancer POTEN-C Clinical Trial

UT Southwestern is leading the first clinical trial using stereotactic ablative radiotherapy (SAbR) to preserve sexual potency after prostate cancer.

The Prostate Oncologic Therapy While Ensuring Neurovascular Conservation (POTEN-C) clinical trial is a national, multicenter trial, led by UT Southwestern cancer specialist Neil Desai, M.D. The POTEN-C trial combines SAbR with a new technique that aims to lower the dose of radiation to nerves and vessels involved in sexual function, which hopefully will reduce patients' risk for erectile dysfunction.

Controlling Cancer While Preserving Potency

It's natural and healthy to want an active sex life through middle age and beyond. The most frequent, long-term risk for men undergoing radical prostate cancer treatment of any kind is erectile dysfunction.

Preserving sexual function has previously been of secondary concern in the field of prostate cancer research, in which the main focus has been finding the best way to cure or control the cancer itself. Over the past decade, researchers at UT Southwestern have helped develop SAbR for prostate cancer, which delivers highly precise treatment over a shorter time period than traditional approaches. These studies have shown that SAbR maintains high cure rates, and the efficacy of this approach has allowed new research to shift to sexual wellness.

Preserving sexual function after prostate cancer

It's a side effect that weighs on 50 percent of men who battle prostate cancer – the loss of potency. Researchers at UT Southwestern Medical Center are embarking on a clinical trial that will put a new therapy to the test. It's designed to preserve sexual function after prostate cancer.

About the Study

The POTEN-C trial combines SAbR with SpaceOAR, a gel that increases the space between the prostate and rectum during radiation therapy. The idea is that this extra space will reduce the

risk of sexual side effects after treatment even more than the current generation of SAbR techniques.

UT Southwestern was an early adopter of SpaceOAR gel, demonstrating its ability to reduce radiation effects on the lining of the rectum during SAbR and serving as a lead training site for its use in Texas.

SAbR, also known as SBRT, involves applying a precisely targeted dose of radiation directly to the tumor and sparing nearby healthy tissue. The treatment takes place over one to five outpatient visits to an academic medical center such as UT Southwestern.

In terms of sexual health, men who chose SAbR in our previous trials achieved favorable sexual function outcomes – including higher potency preservation – in the months and years that followed compared to historical data from other forms of radiotherapy and traditional surgery, especially when the surgery was not nerve sparing.

The POTEN-C clinical trial seeks to refine the SAbR treatment even further, preserving more patients' sexual function, satisfaction, and overall quality of life. With the increased flexibility of treatment planning provided by SpaceOAR gel displacing the rectum, we hypothesize in this study that dedicated application of SAbR to spare nerves and vessels involved in sexual function will further improve potency rates after treatment.

Eligibility

Men who are newly diagnosed with prostate cancer or who have been on active surveillance might be candidates for the POTEN-C trial. A total of 120 participants nationwide will be recruited for this trial.

To learn more about the POTEN-C trial, visit www.poten-c.org. Patients should always speak with their doctors about clinical trial opportunities.