Vanderbilt Announces Participation in Ablatherm Study

Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center recently issued the following press release announcing its participation in the US Clinical Trial Study of the Ablatherm-HIFU device from EDAP.

Prostate cancer patients may be eligible for less invasive therapy;
Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center first in state to test new ultrasound procedure

Men with prostate cancer now may have access to a new, minimally invasive surgical procedure. Urologic surgeons at Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center will be the first in Tennessee to test the new Ablatherm procedure, which uses high- intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU) to destroy cancerous prostate tissue without any incision.

Vanderbilt-Ingram is one of 18 centers selected to participate in a clinical trial of 410 men to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of HIFU to treat prostate cancer.

Sam Chang, M.D., associate professor of urologic surgery and Vanderbilt-Ingram's principal investigator, along with co-investigators Michael Cookson, M.D., and associate professor of urologic surgery, and Peter Clark, M.D., and assistant professor of urologic surgery, seek to enroll 15 patients for treatment.

"This is the first FDA-approved study with this device for the treatment of primary, localized prostate cancer. In Europe HIFU is the fastest growing treatment for localized prostate cancer," said Chang. "Right now, through this study, this is the only way in the U.S. for patients to receive this type of therapy in a controlled and safely regulated manner."

Ablatherm works by delivering precisely focused beams of high-intensity ultrasound to prostate tissue through a series of targeted shots. At the point where ultrasound is focused, the sudden and intense absorption of the ultrasound's beam creates a rapid temperature increase in the tissue, which destroys cells in a targeted zone.

HIFU is delivered to the prostate transrectally under spinal or general anesthesia. By precisely moving the focal point of each beam it is possible to destroy a volume of tissue that can include an entire prostate, without damaging surrounding tissue.

As one of the Southeast's leaders in the treatment of prostate cancer and prostate disease, Chang said Vanderbilt-Ingram's involvement with the Ablatherm trial keeps the institution at the forefront of new therapies to treat prostate cancer.

"This procedure carries with it the buzz words of 'minimally invasive,' and in many instances this is what patients are seeking," he said.

In addition to being minimally invasive, another potential advantage of Ablatherm is that the procedure can be repeated, if necessary. However, patients selected for this study will be allowed only one treatment with HIFU.

Ablatherm is recommended for patients 60 and older with localized, early-stage prostate cancer, who because of their age, general condition, or having another disease, may not be surgical candidates. It may also be suggested for those patients who want an alternative to radical prostatectomy.

For more information about the clinical trial, contact the Department of Urologic Surgery at (615) 343-2120.

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What do you think?