

Drug may be alternative to castration

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U.S. medical scientists have found an oral drug is an acceptable alternative to chemical castration to treat prostate cancer.

"In patients with locally-advanced disease, a daily 150 mg dose of bicalutamide (Casodex) following initial radiotherapy has shown significant clinical benefits in terms of overall survival and progression-free survival, compared with radiotherapy alone," said study author Dr. William See, chairman and professor of urology at the Medical College of Wisconsin and chief of urologic surgery at Milwaukee's Froedtert Hospital.

The double-blind, randomized study followed 1,370 early prostate cancer patients who received radiotherapy with curative intent. After a median follow-up of 7.2 years, the researchers found those receiving the daily Casodex regimen reduced their risk of disease progression by 44 percent, and overall risk of death by 35 percent, compared with those receiving a placebo.

"Although many of the adverse effects of castration therapy are manageable, they can have a detrimental effect on quality of life," said See "Here we have evaluated the efficacy and tolerability of a non-castration-based therapy, and found the survival rates to be similar."

The study appears in the Journal of Cancer Research and Clinical Oncology.

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