

# Enlarged prostate: decade-long study demonstrates immediate and long-term benefits of holmium laser treatment

May 20 2011

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(Medical Xpress) -- New research presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Urology Association (AUA) in Washington, DC demonstrates that holmium laser therapy is a safe and durable treatment option for Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) - an enlargement of the prostate that affects most men as they age. The study, conducted by researchers from the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC), is the longest comprehensive assessment of this technology to date, and researchers suggest it may now safely be considered the new, size independent, gold standard for treatment of BPH.

A man's [prostate](#) naturally increases in size throughout life, but can occasionally reach a very large size placing pressure on the urethra and causing urination difficulties and bladder problems. A prostate of 40-60 grams is the average size for which corrective surgery is considered. Holmium [laser therapy](#) of the prostate, also known as Holmium Laser Enucleation of the Prostate (HoLEP) has been used since 1998 at the MUHC as an alternative treatment to surgery. This is particularly valuable for patients who have particularly large prostates and risk factors that render [open surgery](#) difficult.

"Treating small to moderate size prostates by regular Transurethral Resection of the prostate (TURP) - a surgical technique that removes part of the [prostate gland](#) - is still the chosen treatment for the majority of patients," explains Dr. Mostafa Elhilali, Stephen Jarislowsky Chair of

Urology at McGill University, urologist at the MUHC and lead author of the new study. "However, the most challenging aspect about the use of minimally invasive techniques is the high rate of recurrence and the need for re-treatment over time."

The study, which looked at the durability of outcomes of HoLEP in nearly 1,000 patients over 10 years, demonstrated that complication rates are minimal and the need for further treatment, even up to a decade later, is less than 1 per cent, compared to 10-16 per cent with TURP. "Patients treated with HoLEP also have reduced pain and shorter hospital stays than those who undergo an open surgery," explains Dr. Elhilali. "They are often able to resume normal activities within a week and have few to no sexual side effects."

The researchers point out that HoLEP is more effective at adequately treating all sizes of prostatic enlargement, whereas other laser techniques, such as Green Light Laser, is effective on small to moderate size prostates, similar but not better than TURP and lacks the same long-term durability. Green Light Laser has been used at the MUHC since 2005. The results of a study comparing Green Light Laser in different sized prostates showed it to be less effective in treating larger prostates. This study was also presented at the AUA meeting yesterday.

**More information:** [www.aa2011.org/](http://www.aa2011.org/)

Provided by McGill University

Citation: Enlarged prostate: decade-long study demonstrates immediate and long-term benefits of holmium laser treatment (2011, May 20) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-05-enlarged-prostate-decade-long-term-benefits.html>

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