

Less Aggressive Therapy with Screening Detected Cancers

In fact, the USPSTF recommended against screening mammography a few years ago for women aged 40-49. This recommendation has subsequently been proven wrong. In Radiology, 2012;262:797-806, Judith Malmgren from the University of Washington in Seattle published that women age 40-49 with screening mammographically detected breast cancer have a lower cancer recurrence rate and require less aggressive therapy than women whose cancer was not detected with screening mammography. So the USPSTF has a questionable track record. In men with PSA detected prostate cancer, we can frequently treat with less aggressive therapy which results in fewer side effects. If not diagnosed until cancer is more advanced, treatments are more difficult, side effects worse and the cure rate is lower.

The side effects of prostate cancer treatment are rapidly falling. Incontinence after radiation therapy (IG-IMRT or Brachytherapy) is rare. Most recent studies using modern IG-IMRT and Brachytherapy techniques show an extremely low rate of rectal side effects too.

The Bottom Line

While the PSA blood test is not perfect, it is much more sensitive than the digital rectal exam alone in detecting prostate cancer at a stage when it is still potentially curable. PSA screening saves the lives of thousands of men every year. Radical prostatectomy, external beam radiation therapy (IG-IMRT) and brachytherapy (seed implantation) continue to improve. Side effects are falling and cure rates rising.

For example, in the medical journal Cancer in 2011, I published a 99.1% cancer-free survival rate with brachytherapy +/- IMRT. Other experts are publishing similar numbers. We are making major strides in beating this disease. The USPSTF recommendations must be rejected; otherwise we could be put back to where we were 30 years ago. Now that USPSTF has made its final recommendation, it is time to contact your Congressman and Senator and demand that PSA screening continue to be funded.

To learn more or to schedule an appointment, please contact Lakewood Ranch Oncology Center at 941-907-9053 or visit us online at www.LWROncology.com.



Dr. John Sylvester

Dr. John Sylvester is a Radiation Oncologist with 21st Century Oncology in Bradenton/Sarasota, FL. Previously he was co-founder and Director of The Seattle Prostate Institute and Director of the Puget Sound Tumor Institute. He has published over 70 articles in medical journals on prostate cancer, and multiple medical textbook chapters. He is lead investigator in multiple prostate cancer trials. He co-wrote the American Brachytherapy Society Prostate Cancer treatment guidelines and The Prostate Cancer Treatment Book.

Dr. John Sylvester completed both his Medical Degree and specialty training in Radiation Oncology at UCLA. He is board certified in Radiation Oncology by the American Board of Radiology. He was awarded the American Cancer Society Fellowship during his year as chief resident at UCLA. He began performing prostate brachytherapy with Drs. Blasko in 1987, and joined the Seattle team full time in 1988. He is a member of the American Brachytherapy Society (ABS), The American Society of Therapeutic Radiation Oncology (ASTRO), The AMA, The Florida State Medical Society, and the American College of Radiology.

Over the past 2 decades, Dr. Sylvester has performed over 3700 prostate brachytherapy procedures. He has developed, and assisted in the development, of several technical improvements in the IMRT and Brachytherapy prostate cancer treatments including:

- How to better visualize the urethra during the procedure.
- How to optimally utilize R.A.P.I.D. strand.
- He was the first physician in the U.S. to use I125 Echo Seed, a more visible (on ultrasound) radioactive seed.
- He was the lead Seattle investigator in a gene therapy protocol for salvage of external beam radiation therapy failures.
- He initiated the image-guided intensity modulated radiation therapy (IG-IMRT) approach used at the Swedish Cancer Institutes' Radiation Oncology centers, for more precise Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT) for prostate cancer.
- He treated the first patient in the world with the first commercially available Calypso 4-D real-time image guidance unit for prostate cancer IMRT.
- He co-authored the white paper on Calypso 4-D IG-IMRT.
- He worked with Oncura/General Electric to help create THINStrand, a new seed that is 42% thinner than standard sized seeds (less trauma) and is the first physician to use that new seed.
- He is the lead investigator in a multi-institutional protocol evaluating the quality of life outcomes of patients treated with IMRT plus a Cesium seed implant boost.
- Dr. Sylvester worked with the lead Brachytherapists at MDAH and Princess Margaret Hospital on a new brachytherapy outcomes nomogram to replace the outdated and inaccurate nomogram that is in current use.
- He is the first physician in the USA to use SpaceOAR in IG-IMRT prostate cancer patients as part of a randomized FDA protocol hoping to further reduce side effects of prostate cancer IG-IMRT.
- Named one of Sarasota's Best Physicians in 2012 in Sarasota Magazine (as voted on by peers).
- He is also one of the four clinicians who wrote the ABS guidelines used by prostate cancer Brachytherapists worldwide.

The above work has led Dr. Sylvester to being called upon to present at national and international conferences on prostate cancer on a regular basis including: the World Congress of Endourology (Holland), American Society of Clinical Oncology, Urologic Society of Australasia (Melbourne), and European Association of Urology in Germany, GEC-ESTRO/WCB conferences in Europe, and multiple times at the Annual American Society of Therapeutic Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) Conference, the Annual ABS (American Brachytherapy Society) Conference, The Annual Scottsdale Prostate Cancer Symposium, and The Annual Seattle Prostate Institute Advanced Brachytherapy Conferences. He was chosen to debate prostate cancer treatment techniques at the 2011 ABS meeting and moderate at the GEC-ESTRO in Spain in 2012.

Dr. Sylvester was Director of the Puget Sound Tumor Institute from 1991 through 2000. Dr. Sylvester co-founded the Seattle Prostate Institute with Dr. Grimm in 1997 and served as the Director of Education and Training for 9 years. He ran the internationally renowned monthly program which trained more physicians in prostate cancer treatment than any other program in the world. He also ran the highly regarded Annual Seattle Advanced Prostate Brachytherapy Conference. Dr. Sylvester was the Director of the Seattle Prostate Institute from 2006-2008. He was in charge of the ABS Fellowship rotation at the Seattle Prostate Institute, a highly competitive and desired Fellowship program for residents in radiation oncology throughout North America. These programs trained the lead genitourinary radiation oncologists at UCSF, Harvard, MDAH, UCLA, Univ. Chicago, Emory, Rush, Cleveland Clinic, Wake Forrest, Duke, Princess Margaret, British Columbia Cancer Agency, virtually all of the prostate brachytherapy programs in Australia, New Zealand, England, and South America. Until his move to Florida in 2011, he was the Chief Medical Officer of Procura, an organization developed by the Seattle team, focused on improving the quality of permanent prostate brachytherapy throughout the world.

Dr. Sylvester recently moved to Sarasota and now is a member of 21st Century Oncology at the Lakewood Ranch Radiation Center in Bradenton, FL where he continues cutting edge research in both prostate brachytherapy and IG-IMRT. In his free time, he enjoys the company of his wife and children, the beach, and swimming on the USMS and YMCA National Champions Sarasota Sharks Masters Swim Team.

