



Frequently Asked Questions

Why is a review being conducted into radiation treatment at the Royal Adelaide Hospital?

Between July 2004 and July 2006, one of the four linear accelerators at the RAH was calibrated incorrectly and delivered a 5% lower than recommended radiation dose during this two-year period. When the under-dosing was discovered in July 2006, it was believed that there was minimal impact on the effectiveness of treatment. A concern has now been raised about this conclusion, and an external review will be undertaken.

What about the other machines at the RAH?

Only one of the four linear accelerators was calibrated incorrectly.

How many patients does this involve?

The RAH has identified approximately 720 patients who underwent radiotherapy treatment on the machine in question during the two year period under review.

What is the implication for patients?

Preliminary advice indicates the treatments given at the time should still have been effective, but a thorough review will still be done. Regardless, some patients will feel anxious about this information and will want to access support and advice. A call centre has been established at the RAH for counseling support and medical

information. The number to call between 9am and 5pm is 8222 0740.

Have you contacted all patients?

We are in the process of contacting more than 720 patients identified as receiving radiation treatment on this particular linear accelerator at RAH during the two year period in question. Letters are being couriered to these patients. A hospital call centre can be contacted on 8222 0740 between 9am and 5pm for further information and support.

How do I know if I could be one of the affected patients?

The hospital is sending letters by courier to all patients identified as receiving radiation treatment on this particular machine during the two year period in question. If you believe you were a radiotherapy patient at the hospital between July 2004 and July 2006 but did not receive a letter, you most likely did not receive treatment on this particular machine. However, if you have any questions or concerns please call 8222 0740.

What about patients treated at the RAH before or after these dates?

The concern relates *only* to patients who underwent radiotherapy at the RAH between July 2004 and July 2006.





What are you doing to help/support patients now?

The RAH has established a call centre for patients and their families to seek further information and support. It is being staffed by counselors and medical professionals able to answer questions and provide emotional and clinical support and guidance. We will work with patients and their families to provide as much support and assistance as they require.

Why wasn't there a review in 2006?

An internal report at the time concluded there was minimal impact on the effectiveness of treatment. That documentation will be considered as part of the external review.

What will the independent review look into?

A radiation oncologist from NSW will lead a team including a radiation therapist and medical physicist. It will look at the impact of the level of under-dosing, and whether systems and processes put in place following the discovery of the under-dosing need to be reviewed.

When will the review start?

The review is already underway, starting with a preliminary view of the documentation and preliminary provision of advice.

Who is leading the review?

An independent expert radiation oncologist, Associate Professor Geoff Delaney from NSW, will lead the review team, which will include a radiation therapist and medical physicist.

What will be involved in the review?

The investigation will be extremely thorough, and is expected to include a range of evidence-gathering activities, including interviews with staff and management.

How long will it take?

The review could take a few weeks or a few months, and recommendations are not expected immediately. However, SA Health is keen to ensure a quick response, so as not to prolong uncertainty or anxiety for patients.

Will the results be released to the patients/public?

The results and any recommendations will be released to patients and the public.

How will you help/support patients after the review?

Patients will be notified of the outcomes of the review and will continue to be supported through any recommendations for follow-up care. Patients and their families will be offered counseling and support for as long as necessary.

Who can I speak to for more information?

For more details or support, contact the Royal Adelaide Hospital call centre on 8222 0740 between 9am and 5pm.