

CANCER CARE TEAM OF THE YEAR

This award recognises teams that have measurably improved care in cancer through innovation and commitment

WINNER

PAPILLON FOR RECTAL CANCER

PAPILLON SUITE, CLATTERBRIDGE CANCER CENTRE



What they did: Some new treatments spring into use quickly, while others take years, and even decades, to be recognised. Arthur Sun Myint, consultant in clinical oncology at Clatterbridge Cancer Centre in Wirral, Merseyside, first treated a patient with rectal cancer using the Papillon technique in 1993. But it took more than 20 years for the NICE to recommend it.

Surgery is the gold standard of care for rectal cancer, but many elderly patients shrink from it, and with good reason. Mortality is higher than in younger patients, and the fear of having to manage a permanent stoma a worry. The Papillon technique, named for the French doctor who invented it in the 1940s, delivers soft x rays directly to the tumour, destroying it layer by layer. "The energy is very low, and very focused, so there is little collateral damage," Myint says.

He does not claim the results are as good as surgery in the long term but says that "if it doesn't work they can still go for surgery later." Nor is there any reason why it shouldn't be used on younger people, although surgeons are, he says, reluctant to refer them. It takes a determined patient to break through professional scepticism, but one who did, 31 year old Mark Davies, wrote a book about his successful procedure, entitled *Saving my Arse*.

Papillon treatment is much cheaper than surgery—£5600 v £20 000—and, since NICE approval, it has become routine practice, with four centres in England. Bowel screening, which detects many smaller tumours, could multiply the numbers of suitable patients.

Judges' Comments: This provides a real alternative treatment option for patients with rectal cancer, with a solid evidence base and good outcome data and information. It gives patients greater choice and empowers them in decision making. The treatment is starting to be rolled out across the UK, to younger patients as well as the original target population.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

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