



PRESS STATEMENT

October 2006

Glasgow Radiotherapy Incident

The Royal College of Radiologists welcomes the publication by the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board of the report of the investigation into the radiation incident involving Lisa Norris.

Heads of radiotherapy departments across the UK should study this report carefully to identify lessons that can be learnt to improve practice, to detect mistakes and to prevent patient injury.

Radiation incidents involving patients are uncommon. All departments have quality assurance systems and an incorrect treatment is seldom delivered to patients. If an error does occur, it is normally possible to detect the incident and adjust the subsequent course of the treatment to prevent problems for the patient. It is extremely rare for patients to be harmed as a result.

Any error which involves patients is of great concern to the College. We are working with patients and other healthcare professions to identify ways in which processes can be improved to minimise errors. We are also seeking to improve checking procedures so that any mistakes can be detected earlier in a course of treatment. We hope that this will further reduce the risk to patients.

*Dr Michael Williams
Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Clinical Oncology*

Notes to editors

1. For further information, contact the College's Communications Officer on 020 7299 1138, or email dan.garbutt@rcr.ac.uk
2. The Royal College of Radiologists has approximately 7,000 members and Fellows worldwide representing the disciplines of clinical oncology and clinical radiology. All members and Fellows of the College are registered medical or dental practitioners.
3. The role of the College is to advance the science and practice of radiology and oncology, further public education and promote study and research through setting professional standards of practice.
4. Radiotherapy is a key component of curative cancer therapy. Of those who are cured, radiotherapy is involved either alone or in combination with surgery in 40% of cases. With modern CT scanning, the beam can be very accurately shaped to the tumour. It is now possible to image the tumour with the treatment beam. These developments mean that side effects can be reduced and the indications for radiotherapy are widening. Activity grows by 3% every year despite the limitations of treatment capacity in the UK.