



The Royal College Of Radiologists

PRESS STATEMENT

EMBARGO: 00:01 HRS, MONDAY 14 APRIL 2008

11 April 2008

Royal College of Radiologists publishes latest audit on radiotherapy waiting times

The Royal College of Radiologists' (RCR) latest audit on radiotherapy waiting times shows a significant improvement on the results obtained two years ago. Now a third of patients receiving curative radiotherapy wait longer than the recommended maximum of four weeks; previously the figure was 50% of patients. The 2007 survey of radiotherapy waiting times in the United Kingdom is published today, Monday 14 April 2008.

UK wide audits have previously been conducted by the College in 1998, 2003, and 2005; the latest results come from a survey conducted in September 2007. These results show sustained improvement on 2003 and 2005, and a return to the findings of 1998. In particular, the percentage of patients waiting more than 28 days for radical radiotherapy dropped from 53% in 2005 to 32% in 2007.

Sol Mead, Chair of the RCR's Clinical Oncology Patients' Liaison Group, said, "It is pleasing to see that waiting times are improving, but more needs to be done to offer timely treatment to patients across the UK. The Government needs to invest further in both equipment and people to meet waiting times targets, so that patients are afforded the benefits of early diagnosis and early treatment."

Dr Michael Williams, Dean of the College's Faculty of Clinical Oncology, and the audit lead, said, "I am very pleased to see a further reduction in the number of patients waiting longer than the recommended maximum of a month for their radiotherapy treatment. There is good evidence that delay is dangerous for patients. These results illustrate that a reduction in waiting times can be achieved by sustained investment in radiotherapy equipment, staff, and training. We welcome the extension of waiting times targets for radiotherapy in England and the commitment in the Cancer Reform Strategy of £200m to develop this critical service for patients."

Notes to Editors

1. For further information on the survey, please contact the College's Communications Officer, Dan Garbutt, on 020 7299 1138, or dan_garbutt@rcr.ac.uk
2. A full copy of the report is available from the [RCR's website](#) (PDF).
3. The Royal College of Radiologists (RCR) has approximately 7,500 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. The role of the College is to advance the science and practice of clinical radiology and clinical oncology, further public education and promote study and research through setting professional standards of practice.