

Pre Brachytherapy Information – Are Our Patients Well Informed?

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Introduction Patients attending Mount Vernon Cancer Centre for High Dose Rate (HDR) Brachytherapy attend a pre-admission clinic 3-4 weeks prior to their procedure. The brachytherapy is explained and patients are given a written information booklet to consolidate this verbal information.

Purpose The purpose of this study was to assess the quality of pre-brachytherapy written and verbal information given by specialist radiographers to patients scheduled to have HDR for prostate cancer. The importance placed on being well informed was to assist patients to manage their expectations of treatment and result in a better overall experience^{1,2}.

Method 50 patients attending for prostate HDR brachytherapy between September 2025 and March 2026, were asked to complete a survey 1 day post treatment. The cohort consisted of 34 boosts and 16 monotherapy. The survey contained 5 questions, with patients indicating their satisfaction on a Likert scale between 1-5. Space was provided for free text responses to explain their score. They were telephoned 1 month following treatment and the questions were repeated to record any further suggestions and feedback. Evaluation of responses was used to target areas that may require improvement and enhance the quality of the brachytherapy service.

Results In the initial survey 1 day post treatment 39 patients responded (78%). Of these patients only 27 (69%) responded at 4 weeks post treatment.

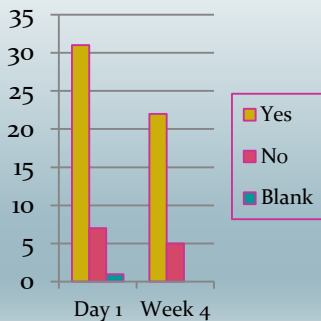
Question 1 - Verbal Information (number of patients)

	Very Helpful		Helpful	
	Day 1	Week 4	Day 1	Week 4
Boost	27	14	2	4
Mono	10	6	0	3

Question 2 – Written Information (number of patients)

	Very Helpful		Helpful	
	Day 1	Week 4	Day 1	Week 4
Boost	27	14	2	4
Mono	8	7	1	2

Question 3 – Was your brachytherapy experience what you expected?



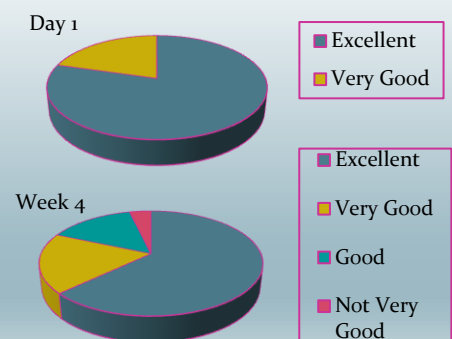
Day 1 comments (sample)

- Exceeded expectations
- Yes, your info was simple and direct
- Everything explained well, so knew what to expect
- Yes but some parts quite painful

Week 4 comments (sample)

- Wasn't what I thought it would be, expected it to be much worse
- I didn't know it was going to be that painful. Catheter painful.
- Better, was hesitant but it was excellent, catheter was very uncomfortable

Question 4 - How would you rate your brachytherapy experience?



Question 5 – What would have made your brachytherapy experience better? Sample of responses

Day 1

If I had won the lottery, I could not have asked for better service

All as expected

Taking out of the needles was painful

Lobster on the menu. Staff need reminding of the absolutely amazing job they do daily

Nothing! Very happy with treatment

No improvements, all worked well, staff fantastic

On and off trolley unsettling

Everyone brilliant, nothing to change

Week 4

Horrible experience, blood clot in catheter, still sore

Clotting before discharge, but nurse managed to sort out very well. If I would have the treatment again, I would certainly like to come back to MVCC

Conclusion and recommendations The information given both verbally and written is clear and informative; however, patients' expectations varied. At 4 weeks, patients appear to have reflected more on the negative aspects of their experience compared to day 1 responses. Assessing patients main concerns at the pre admission clinic could result in more personalised information tailored to each patient. Further research could focus on more detailed quantitative data, following comments made in this small study.

Reference: 1. Corish S. et al., 2024. Impact of patient information format on the experience of cancer patients treated with radiotherapy. *Technical Innovations & Patient Support in Radiation Oncology*, Vol30, June 2024, 100252 2. Anaesth S.J., 2025. Preoperative information as predictor of the patient's fear and anxiety before surgery Systematic review of qualitative and quantitative literature. *Saudi Journal of Anaesthesia*, Sep3;19(4):487-493