



# MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Health and Ageing

## Tony Abbott MHR

29 September 2005

ABB118/05

### **Review of microwave cancer therapy**

The Commonwealth Government has today released a review by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) of the microwave therapy practiced by Dr John Holt in Western Australia.

The Review Committee on Microwave Cancer Therapy undertook a comprehensive assessment of the methods used by Dr Holt, including examination of Dr Holt's past and present patient records. The committee also examined all published scientific evidence on microwave cancer therapy.

The review committee found no scientific evidence to support the use of microwaves in treating cancer, either alone or when combined with other therapies.

The final report on the therapeutic effectiveness and safety of microwave cancer therapy concluded that:

- There is no high-quality published scientific evidence which shows superior benefit in terms of therapeutic effectiveness for the treatment of cancer with:
  - microwave (or UHF) cancer therapy when combined with radiotherapy (used by Dr Holt before 1991); or
  - microwave cancer therapy when used in combination with glucose blocking agents (used by Dr Holt since 1991)
- Microwave cancer therapy in combination with radiotherapy was inferior compared to standard conventional radiotherapy with respect to disease control and survival for patients with breast cancer, lung cancer, lymphoma or prostate cancer.
- There was no significant difference in survival between conventional radiotherapy and microwave therapy used in combination with radiotherapy for patients with head and neck, colorectal or bladder cancer.
- Microwave therapy in combination with glucose blocking agents was inferior to radiotherapy in terms of symptom control and disease control in patients with bladder or any invasive cancer.
- There is insufficient information to make a reliable assessment of the safety of UHF in combination with radiotherapy, or in combination with glucose blocking agents for the treatment of patients with cancer.
- Conventional radiotherapy had better symptom control rates in bladder cancer patients, than UHF in combination with radiotherapy or in combination with glucose blocking agents.
- UHF in combination with glucose blocking agents appeared to have a lower rate of toxicity than UHF in combination with radiotherapy, or conventional radiotherapy.

It is important that every effort is made to ensure cancer patients continue to have access to proven effective cancer therapies.

It is important that patients have access to accurate information about benefits and risks of treatment for cancer and other diseases so they can make fully informed decisions.

The committee was made up of eight scientists, specialists and clinicians and a consumer representative, who worked on this review for almost a year.

Copies of the NHMRC report are available at:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/advice/consumers/microwave.htm>

A hard copy can also be obtained by calling John Rogers at the NHMRC on (02) 6289 9199.

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