Dermatologists Expand Practice and Treatment Offering By Using Low Dose Surface Radiation Therapy

By Richard Shaffer

New Technology Provides Both Electronic Brachytherapy and Superficial Radiation Therapy in One Treatment Device

Skin cancer incident rates are growing as the global population ages. For non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC) specifically, Mohs surgery continues to be the standard of care, delivering highly effective cure rates. There are of course always potential downsides to surgery, especially for patients with other comorbidities, such as those having medical conditions requiring blood thinners, patients with diabetes and individuals taking an immunosuppressive agent. For these reasons and others, many dermatologists are now looking to other treatment options to diversify their treatment armamentarium for NMSC.

According to a study done by the University of Toronto, more than 19% of patients treated for NMSC would be good candidates for radiation therapy. However, only about 1% of the patients in the study were treated with any kind of radiation. This retrospective multi-disciplinary study was completed in 2011, analyzing patients treated between January 2004 and January 2008 — well before many of the more modern technology advances we now see in surface radiation, especially the development of low-dose, superficial office-based treatment devices. This data suggests the percentage of patients who are suitable for treatment with radiation could even be higher given the current technology landscape.

For dermatologists who are considering expanding their in-office treatment options for NMSC, and also keloids, new devices that combined both electronic brachytherapy (eBt) and superficial radiation therapy (SRT) are now approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a treatment option for select patients. Patients have responded very favorably to low-dose radiation therapy across many treatment sites including the nose and face, scalp, hands, ears and lower legs.

One such technology, RADiant by Xstrahl, offers a compact, lightweight device featuring both eBt and SRT capability in one device, giving dermatologists the ability to choose which modality is best for their patients in any given treatment situation. Many patients appreciate having fast, comfortable treatments without surgical-related risks, such as scarring and functional deficits.

With the adoption of any new technology, it is always important to consider the implementation process, potential learning curve and also the payor dynamics. For dermatologists who may not have a lot of experience using radiation therapy, RADiant provides an intuitive clinical interface that makes it easy to create treatment plans and manage patient data. It is easy to define eBt or SRT treatment parameters successfully and deliver target treatment to the skin surface while minimizing the dose to healthy tissues.

In addition, the compact footprint also makes the device easy to move, with minimal to no shielding required and little to no upfront investment. The RADiant procedure is typically reimbursed by Medicare and most private insurers. Many patients have also requested surface radiotherapy during the COVID-19 threat, to avoid prolonged face-to-face contact in the office or surgical procedure resulting in an open wound.

RADiant is produced by Xstrahl, an ADAM corporate member and trusted medical technology company that has been developing superficial radiation therapy devices for more than 25 years. Xstrahl systems are used by more than 700 centers worldwide to treat non-melanoma skin cancer and other diseases, providing a level of confidence in treatment adoption and utilization. To find out more about this emerging technology, visit ***radiant-therapy.com***. ■

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