

NEW TREATMENTS

In the past the only treatments available for CRPC patients were not particularly effective and the survival of men after becoming refractory was often measured in months. In recent years, however, a number of new therapies have been introduced for both metastatic and non-metastatic CRPC patients. These preparations have different pathways at a chemical level and are now used usually after chemotherapy. They prolong survival, but they do not appear to provide a cure.

A frequent feature of mCRPC is spread of tumours to the bones. There is now a medical preparation called *Radium 223 dichloride*, an alpha emitter, which selectively targets bone metastases without damage to healthy tissue.

Treatments Overseas

There are a number of other diagnostic and treatment procedures which are not currently available in Ireland for reasons of our population size or the cost of licensing or because many of the treatments are still seen as controversial or unproven in terms of conferring a benefit in terms of overall survival.

Some Irishmen have used *Cryotherapy* as a second line treatment when their initial treatment failed. Cryotherapy freezes the prostate and kills the prostate cancer cells. This is available in the UK and one of MAC's peer-to-peer volunteers has undergone this treatment in Sunderland, England.

Other examples of treatments available abroad are *HIFU* (High Intensity Focused Ultrasound). Men and their families often go to great expense and dislocation when they decide to avail of non-standard treatment abroad.

The conventional wisdom is to seek evidence that the proposed treatment is proven to confer an advantage in terms of overall survival and/or quality of life and that the treatment has undergone follow-up for 5, 7 or better still, 10 years. If such information is not available then the treatment should be regarded as experimental.