

## Press Release

Issue date: November 1st 2007

Photo Opportunity : 1pm on November 6<sup>th</sup> – Theatre 9a . Meet Press Officer at 12.45 in Atrium.

### **RUH Urologists embrace innovative keyhole surgery technique for prostate cancer**

Men with prostate cancer at Bath's Royal United Hospital (RUH) are now being offered keyhole surgery as part of their treatment. The innovative technique - Laparoscopic radical prostatectomy (LRP) is only offered in a few UK hospitals. Its availability at the RUH means that it is now one of the few hospitals in the UK to offer **all** treatments for prostate cancer on one site. To date, twenty patients have been operated on successfully.

LRP is a technically difficult procedure, developed by French surgeon Professor Richard Gaston. Two of Bath's urology surgeons, Jonathan McFarlane and Graham Howell, have visited his unit in Bordeaux to train with him. Whilst there, they learned about the different techniques used in LRP; the equipment required and observed eight procedures directly. To complete the training process Dr Hoepffner, one of Prof. Gaston's colleagues, has been visiting Bath regularly to supervise the first 30 operations.

Mr Howell, who has been removing kidney cancers with keyhole technology for the last 3 years, says that LRP is much less of an ordeal than conventional surgery: "Patients only need to stay in hospital for a couple of days; they get better quicker and can return to work and resume energetic physical activity within 4 weeks. They are also much less likely to suffer the side effects of impotence and urinary incontinence."

Consultant urologist Jonathan McFarlane says: "The introduction of keyhole prostate cancer surgery at the RUH is a big step forward, allowing us to offer state of the art treatment which will greatly benefit men in this area. We are very fortunate to have the help of Dr Hoepffner, one of the world's best laparoscopic surgeons, who has given up a lot of time to help train us to his very high standards."

One local patient to benefit from the surgery is 53 year old Geoff Cary from Melksham. When diagnosed with prostate cancer in September this year, a range of treatment options were explained to him: "I chose LRP because the side effects were likely to be significantly less than with normal surgery. I have to say, the whole experience was far better than I had expected. I have had no pain at all during or since the surgery and although I feel quite weak, I was happy to go home on the evening of the third day. Since then, I have been recovering rapidly and am back to cycling and hope to return to work 6 weeks post surgery.

"There is only one word for Mr. McFarlane and the Chesleden team – **excellent**. I am most grateful and hope that, if I ever require hospital treatment again, it's of a similar high standard."

**Ends**

**Photo opportunity: Doctor Hoepffner, Mr. Howell and Mr. McFarlane - Tues 6 Nov at 1 pm. For more info contact Brigid Devlin 01225 825849**

**Note to Editors**

Prostate cancer is the most common type of male cancer in the UK with some 35,000 new cases being diagnosed each year and over 10,000 men per year dying of the disease. The RUH has seen a doubling in the number of cases over the past five years. About 450 diagnoses are made at the RUH every year.

If prostate cancer is caught early, it can be cured. The type of treatment an individual receives will depend on the grade and stage of their particular cancer. There are several treatment options including radiotherapy, brachytherapy (implantation of radioactive seeds) and surgery to remove the prostate. For most men, each of these options has similar success rates, so patient preference is often the most important factor in choosing which therapy to use. Currently brachytherapy and surgery (radical prostatectomy) are the most popular.

Radical prostatectomy has been standard treatment around the world for over 20 years. It offers excellent cure rates, but can cause side effects in some men, the most severe of which are incontinence of urine and impotence (loss of erections).

The RUH is one of the first UK hospitals to use the STORZ High Definition Laproscopic Camera System for this procedure. It was bought with £25,000 donated by the Mark Masons of Somerset.