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Journal of Urology publication reports preliminary multi-center data using ONCURA's ultra-thin, 17 gauge technology as a minimally invasive treatment option for prostate cancer.

New York (October 17, 2003) — As the global leader in minimally invasive prostate cancer treatment products ONCURA™ welcomes the publication of a prospective, multi-center clinical study that evaluates the use of their third generation, ultra-thin needle cryotherapy technology.

“This study demonstrates that ONCURA’s unique third generation equipment is safe, well tolerated and minimally invasive, with excellent cancer control. Our ongoing multi-center trial will continue to investigate the long-term efficacy of this technique”, said Arie Beldegrun, Professor of Urology, Chief of Urologic Oncology at The David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, Los Angeles and the lead investigator of the study. He added, “This method of treatment is simple and effective with a relatively short learning curve, offering excellent initial results. In addition, patients can be treated on an outpatient basis with minimal side effects.”

The study, published in the Journal of Urology, concluded that 17 gauge needles permit precise ice formation, the mechanism by which prostate cancer cells are destroyed. Fewer side effects were also reported, and in particular incontinence rates compared favourably with those reported for the more invasive procedure of radical surgery. Importantly the results were comparable between centers with varying levels of experience, suggesting this approach will become available through multiple centers.

ONCURA has a unique ability to offer physicians treating localized prostate cancer the leading minimally invasive treatment options; brachytherapy for patients with early stage disease and cryotherapy for those with more advanced localized disease. The combination of the leading products in these two segments positions ONCURA as the provider of minimally invasive options across the spectrum of prostate cancer, and strengthens their focus on Urology and Radiation Oncology. Cryotherapy is also one of the few options available to men with recurrent prostate cancer who fail primary radiation therapy.

“This is an important study for ONCURA as it focuses on one approach, our 17 gauge, minimally invasive needles, rather than combining data from different types of cryotherapy equipment,” said James McGlone, ONCURA’s President and CEO. “Previous studies utilizing older cryotherapy equipment are usually retrospective reviews that include various approaches. While they have shown the overall effectiveness of cryotherapy, this Journal of Urology publication specifically supports our belief that minimally invasive ultra-thin needles are the preferred option.”

ONCURA was created through the merger of Amersham’s (LSE, NYSE, OSE: AHM) brachytherapy business with Galil Medical Ltd’s urology business. Headquartered in the United States, ONCURA operates as an independent business of Amersham plc, with Galil holding a minority position of 25 percent. ONCURA has a major global presence in the treatment of prostate cancer, combining market leadership in brachytherapy with the rapidly growing area of cryotherapy.

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Notes to Editor

ONCURA combines Amersham’s global leadership in prostate brachytherapy with Galil’s innovative cryotherapy technology. Brachytherapy involves the placement of small radioactive seeds in the prostate, sparing patients from the more invasive radical prostatectomy surgery. RAPID Strand is an innovative seed product, in which the seeds are contained within a bioabsorbable suture material, allowing them to be more precisely placed according to a plan prescribed by the treating physician.

Cryotherapy is a rapidly growing minimally invasive hyper-cooling treatment that enables rapid and controlled destruction of cancerous tissue in which Oncura’s third-generation system is the leader. Cryotherapy is also an option for the treatment of kidney cancer.