

Ontario Study Highlights Benefits of Laser for Treating Enlarged Prostate

Laser treatment is just as effective as surgery, less invasive and costs less

(TORONTO, November 26) An Ontario study, published in the [Canadian Urological Association Journal](#) and at [Health Quality Ontario \(HQO\)](#), provides new evidence that laser treatment is just as effective as surgery for the treatment of urinary problems caused by noncancerous enlargement of the prostate gland.

As the prostate increases in size, also known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), men can experience many urinary problems including complete blockage. The problem is more common as men get older. In men over 60 years of age, 50%, will have an enlarged prostate and in men over 85, 90% will have an enlarged prostate.

Since 1930 the problem has been treated by surgery that removes part of the prostate with a special instrument placed through the penis. This removes the obstruction and allows the urine to flow more freely and the bladder to empty more completely. There are a number of risks and side effects to the surgery in addition to pain.

Now there is a new approach using laser. The new technique, called photoselective vaporization of the prostate (PVP), is an innovative, bloodless, less invasive and relatively painless alternative to the traditional surgical approach. The question was whether the new approach is as effective and HQO commissioned a two-year study of PVP.

“The study found that PVP is just as effective as surgery, requires less time in hospital and results in lower rates of post-operative complications,” says Dr. Paul Whelan, one of the study’s authors and a urologist at St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton. “This is one of the most significant advancements in treating benign prostatic hyperplasia that I have seen.”

The field evaluation was conducted by Programs for Assessment of Technology in Health (PATH) Research Institute, an important part of St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton’s research team. Three Ontario hospitals, including St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton, collaborated to provide patients for the study. The GreenLight™ HPS-120 laser used in the research was loaned by the American Medical Systems.

“The study found that PVP appears to provide similar or better clinical benefits to traditional surgery, at a lower cost to the health system,” says Dr. Leslie Levin, Vice President of HQO’s Evidence Development and Standards branch. “Based on the evidence, HQO’s Ontario Health Technology Advisory Committee recommended that PVP be considered as an alternative to TURP. This change could result in better patient experiences and outcomes, while at the same time freeing up inpatient beds and significant funds for other uses.”

Media Contacts:

Neil McMullin | Senior Communications Advisor, Health Quality Ontario, Toronto |
T: 416.323.6868 ext. 163 | E: neil.mcmullin@hqontario.ca | TW: @HQOntario

For media interviews with Dr. Paul Whelan please contact:

Megan Biekša | Senior Specialist, Media & Strategic Issues
St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton | T: 905.522.1155 ext. 33037 | C: 905.975.2944 |
E: mbiekša@stjoes.ca | TW: @STJOESHAMILTON

More Information:

Health Quality Ontario

Health Quality Ontario works in partnership with Ontario's health care system to support a better experience of care, better outcomes for Ontarians and better value for money. Health Quality Ontario's legislated mandate under the *Excellent Care for All Act, 2010* is to monitor and report to the people of Ontario on the quality of their health care system; to support continuous quality improvement; and to promote health care that is supported by the best available scientific evidence. Health Quality Ontario is an arms-length agency of the Ontario government. Visit www.hqontario.ca for more information.

Programs for the Assessment of Health in Technology (PATH) Research Institute

The Programs for Assessment of Technology in Health ([PATH](#)) Research Institute was established in 2003 and is based at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, but has strong affiliations with McMaster University as well. The PATH Research Institute conducts and promotes evidence-based evaluations of the effectiveness and efficiency of new and existing health care technologies. PATH has extensive expertise in conducting literature reviews, evidence synthesis, biostatistics, economic evaluation, costing, budget impact analysis, decision analytic modeling, policy analysis, health systems impact analysis, and techniques of research translation and knowledge uptake for new policy formation. PATH contributes extensively to policy decision-making at both the provincial and national level and is very active in collaborative research with academia, government, clinicians and industry at the national and international level.

St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton

St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton is a regional leader in patient-centred care providing acute care, research, teaching, community and international outreach programs throughout our network. Founded in 1890 by the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1890, St. Joe's spans three specialized campuses in the Greater Hamilton Area (Charlton Campus, West 5th Campus and King Street Campus), with St. Joseph's Villa Dundas providing long-term care and St. Joseph's Home Care providing personalized home care traversing the reach of our region. For more information about St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, please visit www.stjoes.ca.