

AdMeTech Hails New Research That Shows Promise of MRI to Discriminate Aggressive Prostate Cancer From Dormant Disease



On top of prostate issues

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WASHINGTON /PRNewsWire-USNewsWire/ -- New preliminary data from a pilot study in the Netherlands indicates that imaging tools may help address the most challenging clinical dilemma of prostate cancer care as identified by the hearing of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and its expert witnesses last week: to treat or not treat, AdMeTech Foundation's President and CEO Dr. Faina Shtern said Tuesday.

The preliminary study, done by a world-leading team of researchers led by Dr. Jelle Barentsz, Professor of Radiology and Chair of Research at Radboud University, demonstrated a high discriminatory performance of the novel MRI methodology (Diffusion-Weighted Imaging) in separating aggressive prostate cancer that must be treated from harmless disease conditions that don't require treatment. The study of 51 patients will be released at the European Congress of Radiology on March 10.

"Today's MR imaging is getting more precise every day in defining cancer anatomy. In addition, functional MR techniques like Diffusion Weighted Imaging, Dynamic Contrast Enhancement, Spectroscopy, and cell specific agents (e.g., Combidex) have shown to result in improved detection of aggressive cancer," said Dr. Barentsz. "These imaging techniques visualize aggressive prostate cancer -- together with its location and extent, making it possible to guide precision biopsy and to administer 'patient-tailored therapy.' The individualized treatment is expected to improve outcomes, reduce morbidity and save costs. Further research in this area is of utmost importance," added Dr. Barentsz, co-leader of AdMeTech's International Prostate MRI Working Group, a research program headed by Dr. Shtern and funded through a peer review process by the Telemedicine and Advanced Technologies Research Center of the Department of Defense. In the most recent meeting of the Group, other leading physicians and scientists from the United States and Europe highlighted Diffusion-Weighted MRI as one of the most promising emerging imaging tools for guidance of early diagnosis, biopsy and treatment.

"This emerging data give us great hope for ending blind patient care and the related staggering extent of overdiagnosis and overtreatment associated with current screening tools, such as blood test PSA and digital rectal exams. The data also shows the need for private and public funding of a larger scale, definitive studies on the clinical value and cost-effectiveness of imaging technologies such as MRI and their potential to eliminate unnecessary procedures and to select the most effective and the least invasive patient care," said Dr. Shtern.

She emphasized that while early detection is critical to cure prostate cancer and to save lives, poor specificity of current diagnostics causes up to 54 percent of men with early prostate cancer to have unnecessary treatment, which has dire societal and human costs.

Dr. Shtern added, "Improved diagnostic tools, which will correctly identify patients who require treatment and those who do not, will save lives and improve the quality of life in millions of men while saving billions of dollars in health care costs."

Prostate Cancer Facts: Prostate cancer is the most common major cancer in the United States and the second most lethal cancer in men. Over the last twenty years, the incidence of prostate cancer has increased sharply in men in their 50s and younger. Prostate cancer strikes as many as 1 in 6 American men and has become even more common than breast cancer (striking 1 in 8 women). However, national investment in research is lagging behind and men do not have accurate, life-saving diagnostic tools akin to mammograms. The lack of accurate diagnostic tools has caused prostate cancer to become both a patient care crisis and a socio-economic problem. In addition to overdiagnosis and overtreatment, underdiagnosis is widespread. Indeed, under-estimation of prostate cancer spread and aggressiveness leads to prostate cancer recurrence and progression in as many as half of all the men undergoing treatment. Even though prostate cancer can be cured if detected early, an American man dies from prostate cancer every 19 minutes.

About the AdMeTech Foundation

AdMeTech Foundation is a nonprofit organization with the mission to end the prostate cancer crisis. AdMeTech provides international leadership and conducts ground-breaking programs in research and education to facilitate development of accurate diagnostic tools for early detection and minimally-invasive treatment of prostate cancer. For more information, log onto www.admetech.org.

About the International Prostate MRI Working Group

The International Prostate MRI Working Group offers a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional approach to the advancement of MRI and Magnetic Spectroscopy (MRS) technologies and their integration with treatment of prostate cancer. A strategic partnership of leaders of academia, industry, philanthropy and advocacy groups, the Group seeks to develop ground-breaking research and to develop the near- and long-term research strategy for facilitated advancement of MRI/MRS. This will include development of technical specifications, standards and quality control for clinical testing. The Group develops a vision for the future of image-guided, minimally-invasive patient care and clear pathways for its successful realization.

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