# NICE Approves Selective Internal Radiation Therapy for NHS Patients with Liver Neuroendocrine Tumors



The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has announced that highly targeted radiotherapy treatment, known as Selective Internal Radiation Therapy (SIRT), will now be available for all NHS patients with neuroendocrine tumors (NETs) in the liver. This decision is expected to save lives by offering an additional treatment option for liver tumors.

SIRT involves injecting tiny radioactive beads into the liver's blood supply. These beads lodge in small blood vessels within cancer cells and release radiation, destroying the cancer cells while causing minimal damage to surrounding healthy tissues. The procedure typically lasts between one to two hours and has been associated with fewer side effects and quicker recovery times compared to surgery or chemotherapy, according to a NICE review.

Previously, SIRT was restricted to patients under specific circumstances. The cancer charity PLANETS, which supports patients with pancreatic, liver, colorectal, abdominal, and NET cancers, welcomed NICE's recommendation. CEO Layla Stephen cited the new guideline as a significant step forward, emphasizing the potential for improved patient outcomes.

NETs are rare cancers, often found in the pancreas, bowel, or lungs, and approximately 6,000 new cases are diagnosed annually in the UK. These tumors commonly spread to the liver by the time they are diagnosed, limiting treatment options.

Leading oncologist Professor Pat Price, chair of Radiotherapy UK, expressed support for the updated NICE guidance, highlighting the broader potential benefits of radiotherapy. Price called for greater recognition of radiation therapy's role in cancer treatment, emphasizing its cost-effectiveness and potential for life extension.

The decision by NICE represents an advance in the availability of innovative cancer treatments within the NHS, aiming to enhance the quality of life and treatment outcomes for patients with liver tumors.