

# Radiotherapy

## **What is Radiotherapy and when is it used?**

Superficial X-ray Therapy (SXRT) is a modality which is highly effective for the treatment of basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC). It is not a preferred therapy for melanoma.

SXRT is typically used in very extensive cancers, in cancers where surgery might be unduly complex, in older patients, in poor surgical risk patients and as a combination treatment with surgery.

As a general rule, SXRT is more time consuming and is more expensive than surgery. However, overall it is a well tolerated therapy and does not make patients feel unwell as does the deeper form of XRT used for internal cancers. The early cosmetic results are excellent, though chronic radiation scarring does slowly develop over 5 to 10 years and may ultimately be unsightly. This is the reverse of surgery where scarring is always at its worst initially and tends to improve with time.

SXRT has a very important role in the treatment of skin cancer, either as a solo treatment or in combination with surgery.

## **Further reading:**

Standard surgical excision

Mohs surgery

Mapped serial excision