

Publication Summary



# Delphi study to identify consensus on patient selection for hydrogel rectal spacer use during radiation therapy for prostate cancer in the UK

Payne H et al. *BMJ Open*. 2022, Jul 20; doi: [10.1136/bmjopen-2021-060506](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2021-060506)

## BACKGROUND



- Hydrogel spacers can help reduce rectal toxicity during radiotherapy (RT) for prostate cancer<sup>1,2</sup>
- Patient access to hydrogel spacers is limited in the United Kingdom (UK), so it is necessary to understand which patients should be prioritised for their use

The present Delphi study aimed to identify expert consensus on patient prioritisation for rectal hydrogel spacer use during radical RT for the treatment of prostate cancer in the UK.

## METHODS

Consensus was reached through the Delphi methodology.



**7** experts  
(6 oncologists, 1 urologist)



**2** outcome analysts  
(working independently)

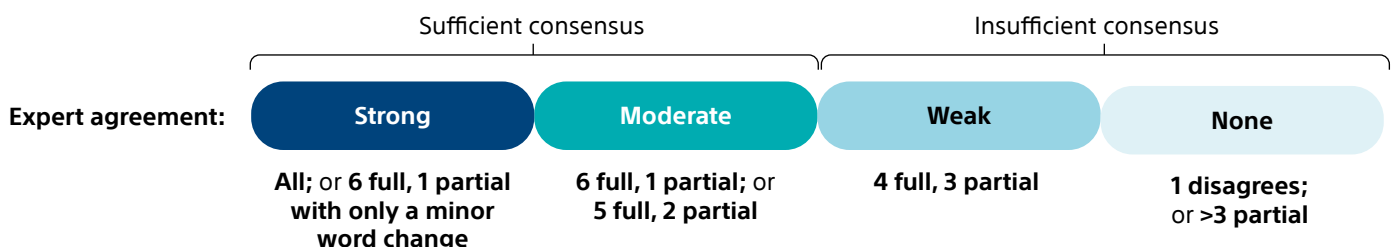


**5** stages



Note: The Delphi technique is an iterative, multistage process in which the opinions of a set panel of experts are synthesised into consensus statements through a series of increasingly specific questionnaires and feedback. All experts were experienced in using hydrogel spacers.

### Consensus scoring:



## RESULTS

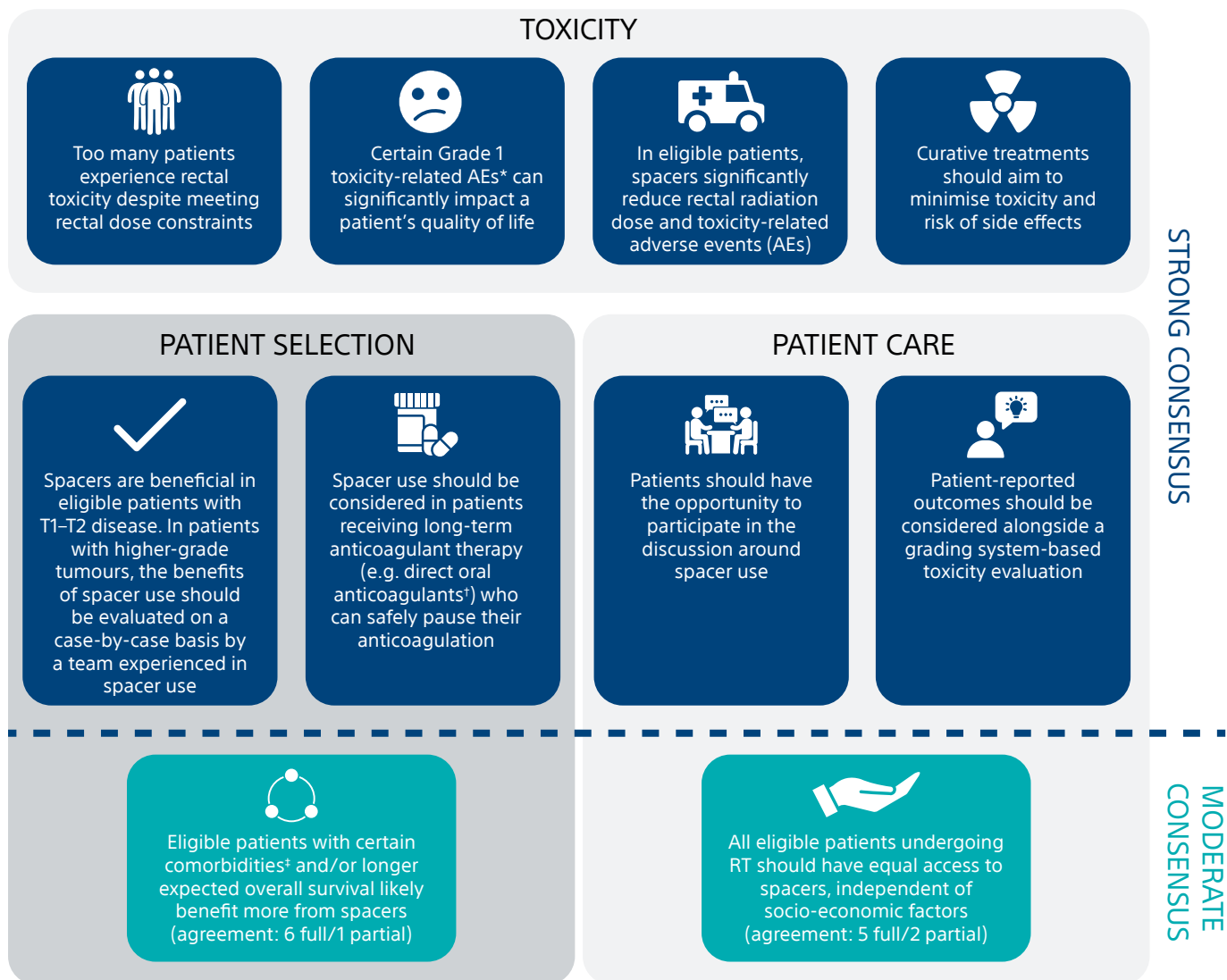
Most experts agreed that hydrogel spacers reduce post-RT rectal toxicity of any grade:

Grade 1/2:  
100% agreement

Grade 3:  
86% agreement

Grade 4:  
71% agreement

10 statements found sufficient consensus:



### Strengths

- Scientific rigour through applying the established Delphi technique
- An experienced and diverse expert panel

### Limitations

- All experts in the panel are experienced users of hydrogel spacers
- A panel size of only seven individuals, whose experiences may not reflect those of other spacer users

## CONCLUSION

- The use of hydrogel spacers is potentially advantageous for all patients undergoing radical RT for prostate cancer, particularly for those with diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease and/or those receiving anticoagulant therapy
- These recommendations may help prioritise and equalise spacer access for patients in the UK

## REFERENCES

1. Mariados N, Sylvester J, Shah D *et al.* Hydrogel spacer prospective multicenter randomized controlled pivotal trial: Dosimetric and clinical effects of perirectal spacer application in men undergoing prostate image guided intensity modulated radiation therapy. *Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys.* 2015; **92**: 971–7.
2. Hamstra DA, Mariados N, Sylvester J *et al.* Continued benefit to rectal separation for prostate radiation therapy: Final results of a phase III trial. *Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys.* 2017; **97**: 976–85.

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This study was funded by Boston Scientific. The panellists were reimbursed for their time commitment during the Delphi process at local market rates.

\*Bowel frequency/urgency, flatulence, diarrhoea, radiation cystitis or proctitis, and rectal bleeding or mucus.

†All patients receiving a direct oral anticoagulant (DOAC) can potentially pause their anticoagulation safely, except for those with cardiac stent or prosthetic valve replacement. Thus, the reason for the DOAC prescription is key in deciding on suitability for spacer use.

‡Diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease (ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease) or receiving anticoagulants.

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UROPH-1360503-AA

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