

**PRESS RELEASE**

**LASER IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE**

Milan, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2005 - Laser technology contributes to the improvement of the treatment of larynx cancer, reducing the physical and psychological weight of the cure. A research conducted by the équipe of Cervico-Facial Surgery of the European Institute of Oncology of Milan, being published by the scientific magazine Head and Neck, shows that, in cases of initial cancer, the use of a latest-generation laser allows to perform both the diagnosis and the treatment of the neoplasy with a single intervention of micro-invasive surgery, that is the one needed for the bioptic sampling.

In standard clinical practice, the tissue needed for a biopsy is collected by taking small cell samples from the vocal cord "in scattered order". According to the result, the physicians decide whether to continue with the radiotherapy treatment or not.

IEO researches realized that in many cases (about one fourth of the patients subjected to biopsy) the lesion is completely removed by these bioptic samplings. Nevertheless, the "scattered order" sampling technique doesn't allow always to be sure that the neoplasy has been totally removed, therefore the patients are asked to follow a radiotherapy session in any case. That is the source of the idea to use laser technology to overcome this diagnostic limit and try to make the diagnostic and therapeutic procedures correspond in most of the cases.

"The vocal cord is composed of many layers, just like an onion – explains Fausto Chiesa, Manager of the Division of Cervico-Facial Surgery of IEO – We thought of using laser to remove the whole superficial layer: enough tissue to perform a full bioptic examination and, with reasonable safety, to remove any initial cancers. This tissue is then orientated like a geographical map: in this way, the histological examination allows us to perform the diagnosis, but also to know if we succeeded in completely removing the neoplasy and where it has to be removed, if that is the case. This technique permits us to save about 85% of the radiotherapy treatments usually believed to be essential after a traditional "scattered order" biopsy, with the same chances of recovery and often in a single surgery session, that binds the patients for two or three days.

The superficial layers of the vocal cord spontaneously re-forms after few days, without any further side-effects. The patient doesn't face a more invasive diagnostic intervention than the standard one, but avoids the need to be subjected to the external radiotherapy sessions, with the obvious physical, psychological and logistic discomforts. We must not forget that not all the ill people can easily get access to a radiotherapy centre near their homes, and that a radiotherapy treatment usually lasts about six weeks, engaging not only the patient, but also his/her family that accompanies him/her to the radiotherapy centre and assists him/her during the treatment."

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