



THE AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF DERMATOLOGISTS

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**DERMATOLOGISTS SHINE LIGHT ON 'NO-CUT' CANCER TREATMENT**

Australian dermatologists using photo-dynamic therapy are now able to treat many skin cancers without resorting to surgery. All that is needed is application of a sensitising cream to a tumour which is then lit up by a red light. The resulting reaction kills the cancer.

Dermatologist, Professor Ross Barnetson of the University of Sydney, explains that excellent results can be obtained for selected malignancies. "No longer do some patients need to have uncomfortable surgery or freezing to cure their skin cancer."

According to Professor Barnetson, the treatment relies on the cancer cells absorbing a substance in the cream which, after a red light is shone on it, forms a toxin lethal to the cell. "Normal skin is spared, as the cream is applied only to the cancer. Cancer cells absorb much more of the active ingredient, 5 aminolevulinic acid, than do non-malignant cells," he adds.

Professor Barnetson warns that there is some discomfort, but this is easily relieved. "Cosmetic results are usually superior to surgery".

It is an especially useful treatment for cancers in areas of cosmetic concern or where healing will be a problem. Patients with large but superficial basal cell cancers who previously would have had to go through prolonged, complex and possibly risky surgery which leaves significant scars, can be offered photo-dynamic therapy. "Although not ideal for every patient, it is another weapon against cancer in the armoury of Australian dermatologists," according to Professor Barnetson.

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To arrange an interview, please contact:

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