

**CoRIPS Research Award 019:**  
**Evaluation of patient compliance on the use of vaginal dilators post pelvic radiotherapy**

**Hypothesis:** Advice and information on the use of vaginal dilators is offered to women undergoing pelvic radiotherapy (or brachytherapy) in accordance with national guidelines, however compliance with the recommendations remains low. Design of an appropriate national, patient centred information leaflet with user input will ensure production and delivery of optimal information resulting in higher compliance rates.

**Background:**

Vaginal stenosis (narrowing and shortening of the vagina) is a common chronic toxicity following pelvic radiotherapy that may lead to sexual dysfunction and difficulty in post treatment vaginal examinations. National guidelines in the use of vaginal dilators were first published in July 2005 following evidence that they were an effective tool in reducing vaginal stenosis.

**Purpose and design:**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate vaginal dilator compliance in women who have received pelvic radiotherapy for a gynaecological cancer and to identify any trends that may reduce compliance (for example age, vaginal symptoms, body image and treatment type)

Subject to ethical approval, a self-completed questionnaire will be sent to 130 women who have received radiotherapy or brachytherapy for cervical or endometrial cancer, and are currently disease free.

Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected to facilitate an understanding of issues that may hinder compliance.

**Anticipated outcomes:**

Currently there is no national provision of patient information on the use of vaginal dilation and sexual rehabilitation. The anticipated service development from this study is to design a national information document for all women undergoing pelvic radiotherapy covering all aspects of sexual health post pelvic radiotherapy. Re-evaluation of vaginal dilator compliance would be undertaken following design of improved patient information to assess outcomes.