Multidisciplinary Colon and Rectal Cancer Care

The Division of Colon and Rectal Surgery at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas (BUMC) has established a multidisciplinary approach (MDT) to rectal cancer which is unique in that all rectal cancer patients are required to be reviewed by a team prior to treatment that includes all specialists who focus on rectal cancer. This includes surgeons (colorectal and oncology), medical oncology, radiation oncology, radiology and pathology. Review of staging, need for neoadjuvant and adjuvant therapy, completeness of the resection after surgery, accuracy of MRI and pathologic staging and appropriate treatment plan is performed for every patient and a plan sent to the patient and the referring physician.

This process is following the National Accreditation Program for Rectal Cancer (NAPRC) standards established in conjunction with the Commission on Cancer and the American College of Surgeons, American College of Radiology, College of American Pathology, American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons (ASCRS), Society of Surgical Oncology, Society of Surgery for the Alimentary Tract, Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons, the Society for Optimization of Surgical Treatment of Rectal Cancer, and the American Cancer Society.

The Commission on Cancer conducted a pilot review program based on six (6) programs in the United States which are practicing standards developed by the OSTRiCh (Optimizing the Surgical Treatment of Rectal Cancer) Consortium and the ASCRS. Baylor University Medical Center’s Division of Colon and Rectal Surgery was the second institution to be reviewed and will be among the first to be officially accredited. The BUMC group was involved in developing the final set of standards to be used in programs across the country and BUMC surgeons have been involved in the program since its inception.

The use of the NAPRC MDT approach has already resulted in improved staging, accuracy of reporting and quality surgical care of the rectal cancer patients. A 2015 publication in the American Journal of Surgery documents the process and improved outcomes of the MDT at BUMC. Quarterly review of the process along with biweekly MDT discussions are able to accomplish this personalized medicine approach which provides ongoing quality improvement of all aspects of the care of the rectal cancer patient.

James Fleshman, MD
Chairman of the Department of Surgery
Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas