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Brain cancer treatment trial for Tas

Posted Wed May 13, 2009 12:23pm AEST

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The Royal Hobart Hospital is trialing a brain cancer treatment it is hoped will improve patients' survival rates and quality of life.

Oncologist Dr Rosie Harrup says the trial combines chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

"We do have evidence that combining chemotherapy with long courses of radiotherapy in patients with brain tumour improves their survival compared to radiotherapy alone," she said.

"The aims are not only to see who lives longer but who lives better and for brain tumour patients, that's a very important consideration."

The trial is being run internationally but a Tasmanian man is one of the first in Australia to take part.

Malcolm Swann was diagnosed with a brain tumour two months ago.

But the 72-year-old is not letting it get him down.

"It's in the lap of the gods, everyday's a winner and you've got to think positive," he said.

"I've got another grandchild on the way to be born in September and I'd love to be around just to see that one."

The treatment has never been trialed on older patients because of the risk of toxicity.

In a similar trial involving young brain cancer patients, the number still alive two years after diagnosis doubled.

Trial co-ordinator Dr Marketa Skala says the research is a step forward for Tasmanian cancer patients.

"By participating in these trials we are able to prove that the treatment we deliver is as good in Hobart as it is around the world."

Trials of breast and prostate cancer treatments are also about to start at the Royal.

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