



**Dr. Belinda Barclay-White (left) and Dr. Coral Quiet consult with each other as they review a mammogram.**

## One-Stop Cancer Care

The two-year-old Arizona Institute for Breast Health in Scottsdale—along with the Foundation for Cancer Research and Education—is one of six facilities in the U.S. participating in clinical trials targeting early-stage breast cancer with accelerated radiation therapy. This new treatment could be available to the general public next year, pending FDA approval to market the device when trials conclude in early 2001.

Called the MammoSite Radiation Therapy System, the device is designed to deliver radiation directly to the site of the removed tumor and area immediately surrounding it, where the vast majority of tumors recur, explains the Institute's Medical Director **Coral A. Quiet, M.D.** The treatment also decreases the duration of radiation therapy by 85 percent—from seven weeks to five days, adds Dr. Quiet, a radiation oncologist.

MammoSite's accelerated treatment time may make breast-conserving treatment an option for many more women, says the doctor. Traditional whole breast radiation, which usually follows a lumpectomy, takes six to seven weeks. "If women don't live

near a radiation center, then they have to travel for seven weeks to get radiation. With this new treatment taking only five days, it may be more feasible for women in outlying areas to get this treatment and preserve their breasts."

Only 40 percent of eligible breast cancer patients now choose a lumpectomy over a mastectomy, or removal of the breast, says the doctor. However, women are increasingly choosing breast-conserving treatments—a lumpectomy and radiation—over mastectomies, says Dr. Quiet, pointing out that studies show a breast-conserving lumpectomy with radiation have similar success rates to a mastectomy.

The MammoSite device is a simple applicator with a balloon-tipped end. The balloon is inserted in the surgical cavity created by removal of the tumor, and inflated. During the five days of radiation therapy, a tiny radioactive bead attached to a wire is inserted into the balloon, delivering prescribed levels of radiation to the tumor cavity and the areas surrounding the cavity. Once therapy is concluded, the balloon is deflated and the catheter is removed.

Excluding cancers of the skin,

breast cancer is the most common cancer among women, accounting for nearly one of every three cancers diagnosed in U.S. women, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS). An estimated 182,800 new invasive cases of breast cancer are expected to occur among women in the United States this year. While breast cancer ranks second among cancer deaths in women, the prognosis is brightening: According to the most recent data, mortality rates declined significantly during 1992–1996 with the largest decreases in younger women. These decreases are probably the result of earlier detection and improved treatment, reports ACS.

The Arizona Institute for Breast Health is a one-stop breast cancer shopping center—a still relatively rare concept gaining ground, says Dr. Quiet. "A lot of breast centers are just diagnostic centers," she notes, lacking the Institute's multidisciplinary approach.

A non-profit foundation, the Institute's specialists include a breast surgeon, medical oncologist, radiation oncologist, pathologist, mammographer, plastic and reconstructive sur-

geon, rehabilitation specialist, psychologist, psychiatric nurse and a patient advocate who is a breast cancer survivor.

"We sit down with women after their diagnosis and educate them about their disease and treatment options," says Dr. Quiet. "Our center allows a woman with a new diagnosis to do one-stop shopping by making all needed appointments here."

Additionally, says the doctor: We believe we're not just treating a disease, but we're healing a woman. I think medicine has been very disease-oriented, focusing on taking care of the clinical problem while overlooking the healing process. That's why you see so many support groups; people are wanting to recover emotionally from their disease."

The Scottsdale center offers same-day mammogram evaluation and breast lump evaluation, next-day biopsy results, a support group, seminars and a library.

Counseling and nutritional assistance are also available. "An average weight gain of 20 pounds is a side effect of the breast cancer treatment because of stress, hormonal changes and chemotherapy," explains the doctor. "A lot of women also have a difficult time with hair loss, so there's a lot of body image distortion. If we can get these women on a nutritional program where they're eating healthy, it helps them redirect these negatives into a healthy lifestyle and improved self-image."

Besides enrollment in the accelerated radiation trial, Dr. Quiet's Institute is also participating in the landmark Study of Tamoxifen and Raloxifene (STAR). Designed to see how the drug raloxifene compares with the drug tamoxifen in reducing the incidence of breast cancer, STAR has enrolled 6,139 postmenopausal women at increased risk of breast cancer.

For more information, you may contact Dr. Coral Quiet or patient advocate Christine Faraci at the Arizona Institute for Breast Health: **(480) 860-4200.**

For the Foundation for Cancer Research and Education, contact Ms. Terry Thomas: **(602) 274-4484.** ■