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In this issue

In this issue there are four original articles, a literature review, a case report and a letter to the editor on the subject of research participation among clinical oncology trainees in the Middle East and North Africa.

For online readers, there are the abstracts for posters presented at the 5th Radiotherapy in Practice Conference hosted by Sheffield Hallam University in October 2010.[Suppl Mat1]

A range of topics include a study to assess the efficacy of a probiotic preparation on the prevention of radiation-induced diarrhoea, a systematic and practical approach to characterising intensity-modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) software following upgrades in a commercial treatment planning system, the use of extra-cranial stereotactic therapy in the treatment of lung cancer, EGSnrc computer modelling of megavoltage X-ray transmission through some shielding materials, a study on the pattern of care and survival in older women with breast cancer in India and a case report on head and neck cancer metastasis to the percutaneous endoscopic gatrostomy tube site in two cases. To complete this issue, Pete Bridge writes a Book Review of Image-guided and adaptive radiation therapy (Timmerman, Xing).

In the first article[1], Jaroslav Timko, based at the Central Military Hospital, Ruzomberok, Slovakia, presents his research to assess the efficacy of a probiotic preparation on the prevention of radiation-induced diarrhoea in cancer patients. The study included 42 radio-oncology patients who had undergone adjuvant post-operative radiation therapy after a diagnosis of abdominal or pelvic cancer. The findings of the study demonstrate that there is therapeutic benefit in the use of probiotics as a preventative measure in radiation-induced diarrhoea and quality of life is improved in these patients.

In the second article[2], McGarry, O'Toole and Cosgrove, from Belfast, Northern Ireland, highlight the importance of understanding and characterising any changes that may have been made to the system, when upgrading treatment planning software. In this study, the authors undertake a systematic and practical approach to characterising dose optimisation software following upgrades, based on a planning study of six IMRT prostate cases using the commercial treatment planning system Oncentra Masterplan.

In the third article[3], Al-Ghorabie, Al-Lyhiani and Natto, based at Umm Al-Qura University, Saudi Arabia, undertake computer modelling of megavoltage X-ray transmission through several different shielding materials used for shielding purposes in high energy beams used in radiotherapy. The authors use a computer user-code, based on the use of the EGSnrc Monte Carlo system, they developed to simulate the transmission of megavoltage X-rays through three different materials used for shielding purposes in radiotherapy.

In the next paper[4], Tooke and Roe, from the University of the West of England, Bristol, undertake a literature review to examine the role of extra-cranial stereotactic radiation therapy in the treatment of inoperable stage 1 and 2 non small cell lung cancer patients with highly mobile tumours: accounting for respiratory induced tumour motion. The authors conclude that the data suggests using extra cranial stereotactic radiotherapy using the abdominal compression free-breathing respiratory gating and 4D computed tomography planning,

combined with daily on board kV cone beam computed tomography imaging for setup and target verification, is a possible candidate for further treatment regime assessment in large multi-centre trials.

In the final paper[5], Johnson, Turaka and Feigenberg, from Baltimore in the USA, report on two rare cases of patients with head and neck cancer with metastasis to the surgical percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube site. The PEG tube is used as an alternative to surgical gastrostomy in patients with head and neck cancer for nutritional support. The clinical and treatment related details are presented and discussed.

Professor Angela Duxbury

Supplementary Materials Reference

Suppl Mat 1. RIPs 2010 Poster Abstracts.pdf. J. Radiother Pract 2010; Suppl Mat 1. http://journals.cambridge.org/jrp

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