



SCHOOL

Clinical Practice and Implementation of Image-Guided Stereotactic Body Radiotherapy Course report

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Course directors:

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Could you please briefly introduce yourself?

I am a clinical oncologist based in Hong Kong. I have recently completed my oncology broad certification and have started a new page in my practice and academic career. My clinical and research passions are in central nervous system and lower gastrointestinal tract cancers, and in lymphoma radiotherapy.

Why did you choose to attend this course?

I aimed to gain guidance early in my career on the overall knowledge and key concepts of stereotactic radiotherapy, which is increasingly offered to patients. I also wanted to learn how to improve the radiotherapy service in my department. The European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) course offers a unique opportunity to learn from and connect with other oncologists and experts. This is vital because the cancer community is becoming increasingly connected and competitive. International exposure is essential to the work of an oncologist interested in clinical research.

What aspects of the course were the most interesting and why?

The most interesting parts to me were the clinically relevant lectures on technical aspects, e.g. margins determination and dose fractionation in many common sites for Stereotactic Body Radiotherapy (SBRT). The course content elegantly blended medical, physics, and dosimetric knowledge.

The course was supplemented with a number of quiz sessions throughout the days and within the lectures. The quizzes triggered many constructive discussions between participants and the faculty, highlighted key take-home messages and pointed out differences in practice.

Did the course activities improve your knowledge and skills in the relevant subject?

Yes, they did, for example in planning principles and reporting guidelines.

Some of the talks included significant technical physics, but they were presented at a level accessible to all participants. The faculty was enthusiastic about the benefits of SBRT but they also highlighted the complexity of many clinical scenarios and treatments. All these provided a great foundation for me to improve the service in my department, and offered excellent guidance to good practice.

Did the course meet your expectations? If so, how?

The course exceeded my expectations. Before I attended, I thought only very basic knowledge would be taught in the five days, because almost all body sites would be considered in lectures and there would be many technical tricks and evidence to go through for each site. To my surprise, the tutors were very efficient in time management and very concise in highlighting the essentials from the points of view of oncologists, physicists, and radiotherapists. Detailed discussion was held between teachers and students during lunch and coffee breaks.

List three important 'takeaways' from the course.

Always communicate well with physicists and radiation therapists.

Dose specification standards are important for SBRT if our clinical results are to be readily and reliably compared from one centre to another. Regular review and auditing of treatment outcomes is essential to ensure the highest standards and consistency for radiosurgery and SBRT programmes.

How will what you have learnt be implemented in your daily job/ clinical practice?

My institute will draw up several research study proposals in stereotactic radiotherapy soon, and I can use the knowledge from this ESTRO course to build a stronger application, to create a project, and to update the treatment protocols to further improve the care of patients who undergo radiotherapy.

How would you encourage someone who has never been to an ESTRO course to join this course next year/ in two years?

I will definitely encourage my colleagues to join this course in future.



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