



BRACHYTHERAPY

Editor's pick

Gynaecological intrauterine brachytherapy training for radiation therapists: the development and implementation of a training programme

Sylvia Hanna, Carminia Lapuz, Adeline Lim

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What was your motivation for initiating this study?

At the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness & Research Centre (ONJCWRC), MRI adaptive planning is used for each brachytherapy treatment. In this programme, the radiation therapist (RT) has a large role in the workflow for brachytherapy patients. This includes setup in theatre, ultrasound image guidance during insertion, MRI-based planning and treatment.

At the time when the gynae brachytherapy (GynBT) service was being established at ONJCWRC, there was limited formal training for RTs in GynBT procedures and MRI planning. This resulted in inconsistencies and inefficiencies in the GynBT workflow, prolonging the day for patients and placing strain on staffing resources.

Having had brachytherapy planning experience myself, I initiated the development and implementation of a credentialling programme, providing a structured approach to the GynBT training of RTs to improve the quality of the ONJCWRC GynBT service (1).

What were the main challenges during the work?

The main challenge in implementing this credentialling programme was staffing. Assigning time for RTs to complete their credentialling was sometimes difficult due to their other commitments in planning or treatment. This prolonged their credentialling time, which RTs found to be disruptive and inconsistent.

What are the most important findings of your study?

Providing dedicated time for staff to complete their credentialling is key in maintaining consistency and efficiency.

This credentialling programme supported the brachytherapy RTs in becoming competent, proficient and confident in the various roles in the GynBT workflow, especially MRI planning. Following on from this, we were able to reduce procedure times to improve patient experience and comfort, but still achieve high standard quality plans.

What are the implications of this research?

This in-house programme offers a standardised process for consistency in training and expectations. This programme is mandatory for RTs joining the GynBT team, with further RTs to be trained.



Sylvia Hanna

Radiation Therapist
Department of Radiation Oncology,
Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness & Research Centre,
Austin Health, Melbourne,
Australia
Sylvia.Hanna@austin.org.au

Reference

1. The development and implementation of a training programme. S. Hanna, C. Lapuz, A. Lim. *Brachytherapy* 2022, Online ahead of print.

