



MAKE IT HAPPEN

A right and a moral obligation

Appropriate education of radiotherapists (RTTs) has been a focus of discussion for decades. The article entitled “Their fingers on the button: why neglecting radiation therapists is no longer an option”, written by neuroscientist turned science writer Sophie Fessl and published in Cancer World on 21 October 2020, brings this issue once again to our attention. RTTs have a right to an education programme that provides them with the specialist knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their responsibilities, a right that in many countries has been denied to them. Those of us who have been lucky enough to have received an appropriate education cannot be complacent and self-satisfied; we must strive to achieve the same standard for all our hardworking and well-intentioned colleagues who have not had this opportunity.

The preparation and delivery of radiotherapy is a team responsibility and all members of that team should be enabled to contribute equally. In addition, governments, European Union bodies, professional organisations, national societies and education institutes have a moral obligation to their cancer patients to ensure that the RTTs who deliver treatment have the knowledge and skills necessary not only to treat their patients but to highlight problems and to contribute to the team regarding ways in which things can be improved.

The European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have worked ceaselessly over several decades to address RTT education. They have produced core curricula and benchmarking documents, have organised and delivered short courses and workshops and have integrated RTTs as core members of the multidisciplinary cancer treatment team, which provides a wide range of activities. However, disparities remain in the content of RTT education programmes across Europe and attempts to address these disparities at the highest level have failed.

We hope that the attached article will highlight this inequity once again and raise awareness amongst a wider audience. We would very much like to thank Dr Fessl for her excellent article in Cancer World: <https://cancerworld.net/spotlight-on/their-fingers-on-the-button-why-neglecting-radiation-therapists-is-no-longer-an-option/>



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