



Building partnerships

First Belgian Symposium on Transversal Radiation Oncology

B-STRO, 27-28 September, Brussels, Belgium



What started in 2017 with a dream of one integrated event that would gather all groups involved in radiotherapy treatment of patients, was realised in a two-day symposium that was the biggest ever organised in Belgium.

In terms of state structure, Belgium is a difficult country. There are two important language groups and various organisations that are subdivided into these national languages. In addition to the focus on radiotherapy, this symposium also had the objective of uniting people from the professional field within these language areas.

Before this symposium, scientific cooperation and interaction on a national level between the different groups active in radiotherapy was missing.

Even within education, there is a separate programme in each of the two language areas of the country. There is also no formal education in radiation oncology for nurses. Institutions that organise bachelor degrees for students who graduate as technologists in imaging and radiotherapy have their own education programmes. Therefore there is a gap in education programmes for radiation therapists (RTTs).

This event encompassed two goals. Firstly, we wanted to evaluate and discuss the implementation of motion management across our country to either help the different centres to implement this technique; or to improve protocols. We wanted to end the symposium with the definition of a minimum standard in Belgium. This standard should be evaluated and adapted on a regular basis by working groups, which were to be set up.

The second, and even more important goal of the symposium, was to create interaction between the different disciplines to better understand and appreciate each other in our fast, evolving high-tech discipline.

On Friday afternoon, the symposium started with presentations of three junior abstracts and three talks regarding current or planned studies in Belgian radiation oncology departments. The presidents of the different disciplines highlighted their organisations. There was a nice dinner and social event where further networking could take place.

On Saturday morning we started with a general introduction on the subject of motion management, with the results of a national survey. The focus was motion management for breast and lung cancer. Three parallel sessions then discussed general and group-specific questions. In the afternoon, in a joint discussion session, the different groups reflected on the morning discussions and we ended up with the definition of a minimum Belgian standard on motion management for breast and lung cancer.

As RTTs we had the opportunity to express our concerns about the lack of education for RTT compared to other disciplines. We asked the representatives of attending governmental organisations to reopen a discussion on investment in education of RTTs. It is crucial that people who deliver treatment to patients really know all the details of basic and new techniques in radiotherapy.



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During a session

