



SCHOOL

“IMRT and Other Highly Conformal Techniques in Practice” ESTRO course in Budapest 2-6 June 2019

This year, I had the pleasure of attending the ‘IMRT and Other Highly Conformable Techniques in Practice’ ESTRO course in sunny Budapest. As a medical physicist working with intensity-modulated radiotherapy (IMRT) techniques, this experience promised to be a good way of expanding my knowledge of the field, and it didn’t disappoint. Physicists and physicians from leading European institutions offered comprehensive lectures, which provided valuable insight on the current state of external beam radiation therapy. The mixture of participants of different backgrounds made for very interesting discussions during the homework presentations and in between lectures.

Prior to my departure from our department in Sofia, Bulgaria to Hungary, my colleagues and I had some homework to do for the three interesting cases we were assigned to prepare for presentation during the course. We discussed the cases within our clinic, contoured volumes, prescribed doses, and created and evaluated external beam plans, and I was ready to go. As I arrived a day before the course began, I had an afternoon to walk the banks of the Danube and experience wonderful Budapest.

On the first day of the course, at Hungary’s National Oncology Centre, we met our teachers, listened to some introductory presentations, and separated into groups for practical demonstrations. The scientific agenda for the ensuing days included many lectures, each of which offered new knowledge and raised interesting questions on the subject at hand. Likewise, case discussions provided the foundation for interesting debates and online testing at the end of each day. The live testing system made the exam a little bit like a sporting competition, whilst it provided the faculty with online feedback from the students that gave way to further discussions.

The technical organisation of the course was on a very high level. In addition to a visit to the National Oncology Centre and the scientific program, the schedule also included a guided tour of Budapest. I became familiar with the city’s rich history and culture and enjoyed a dinner provided as part of the course as well as all the delightful participants and teachers.

The course touched on all of the important subjects related to its theme, emphasising the importance of correct measurements for small fields for treatment planning system (TPS) commissioning and good understanding of optimisation algorithms for inverse planning, evidence-based clinical goals, target delineation and image-guided radiation therapy (IGRT). I would certainly recommend this course to anyone working with or considering implementation of IMRT techniques in clinical practice. I appreciate the efforts of everyone involved in organising this helpful experience, and I am looking forward to my next adventure with ESTRO.



Group picture IMRT course 2019 – taken in the garden of the National Institute of Oncology Budapest



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