

Minutes of Brachytherapy Radiographer's Forum

Wednesday 9th June 2010 at St James's Institute of Oncology, Leeds

Attendees:

Mandy Snee (Clatterbridge, Liverpool)	Gemma Boyle (Clatterbridge, Liverpool)
Heather Dias (Maidstone)	Cathy Taylor (Christie, Manchester)
Karen Bew (Poole, Dorset)	Katy Gough (Stoke on Trent, North Staffordshire)
Pat Swinnerton (Stoke on Trent, North Staffordshire)	Glenda Logsdail (Northampton)
Pauline Humphrey (Bristol)	Eleanor Armstrong (UCLH, London)
Louise Bleakley (Edinburgh)	Carol Ewan (Guildford, Surrey)
Gemma Burke (Sheffield Hallam University)	Clare Wilkinson (St James's, Leeds)
Alex Taylor (St James's, Leeds)	Sophie Wetherall (Varian)
Andy Clarke (Nucletron)	

Apologies:

Naomi Morrissey (Christie, Manchester) London)	Naomi Thewlis (Guys and St Thomas', London)
Julie Calvert (Southampton);	Laura Lane (Christie, Manchester)

1. The meeting started at 11.00 with Clare Wilkinson welcoming the group to St James's Institute and brief introductions. It was discussed how to make contact with radiographers in centres not represented at the meeting or on the contact list. Approx 40 UK centres currently involved in brachytherapy delivery. Twelve UK centres represented at this meeting. Approx 30 centres on contact email list. Need to try and contact other brachy radiographers- via Radiotherapy Services Managers or Nucletron and Varian customer lists. Clare informed forum that she had submitted an advert to Synergy, but it wasn't published. Pauline had also done this prior to last year's meeting, but advert did not get published either. It was agreed to try again prior to next meeting and also try Rad magazine. Andy Clarke offered to write an article about this meeting, to advertise the work of the group and will get this published.
2. Pauline and Clare led an open discussion on their proposal to register the forum as a Special Interest Group (SIG) with the Society and College of Radiographers. The SCoR can assist in the setting up and promotion of SIGs and have an officer allocated to help with this, currently Christina Freeman. The benefits of this would be to gain recognition for the work we are already doing in sharing knowledge and expertise. It would help us to develop best standards of care and best practice in brachytherapy. This should lead to improvements in standards and drive developments in brachytherapy. The forum could act as a resource, for expert knowledge in brachytherapy, for the SoR members. It may develop advisory information and expert advice on strategic documents. It should promote research, audit and education. Requirements to be a SIG, would need to elect a chair, vice-chair or co-chairs, write minutes of meetings, produce an annual report and terms of

reference for the group. It was agreed by all present that this would be a useful step forward. Clare and Pauline volunteered to co-chair the forum. This was supported by all present.

It was agreed that the name of the group should stay as “Brachytherapy Radiographers Forum”. The terms of reference were discussed, referring to the Terms of Reference from SoR website for the Musculo-Skeletal Sonographers Group and the Specialist Paediatric Radiotherapy Radiographers Interest Group. It was agreed that there would be no joining cost, and the group would be open to all radiographers currently involved in brachytherapy. Members would cover their own expenses. Manufacturers and members from Educational institutions would be invited to attend the meetings, to provide information and support to the members of the group. It was agreed that we would meet at least once a year, with a date for next meeting set at end of each meeting. Pauline agreed to produce a draft terms of reference to be circulated to the group for approval via email.

3. Karen Bew gave an interesting presentation on the first six months experience introducing HDR brachytherapy with Flexitron in Poole. She started in post in Nov 2009 and started treating vaginal vaults in May 2009 and cervix cases in July 2009. She moved the prostate seed brachy service to be carried out in the same theatre.
4. Naomi Morrissey was unable to attend but sent her skin mould presentation with Cathy Taylor. The history of skin brachy and development of the current technique used at the Christie was explained. Approx 50 patients a year are treated now, with 8# over 5 days, 6 hour gap between treatments, 37.5–45 Gy. Excellent cosmetic and functional results, article published Nov 2007.
5. Andy Clarke from Nucletron gave a presentation on their most recent brachytherapy product developments and the launch of the website www.aboutbrachytherapy.com. This provides information to patients and their families, and a separate section for information for healthcare professionals.
6. Lunch was sponsored by Nucletron.
7. Gemma Burke and Alex Taylor gave a presentation on the academic support and accreditation available at Sheffield Hallam University for brachytherapy. Gemma explained the current programmes available and Alex talked about her experiences in undertaking an expert practice module in vaginal vault insertions. For more information Gemma can be contacted at g.burke@shu.ac.uk.

A discussion followed this presentation, looking at courses other radiographers had undertaken. Cathy Taylor suggested that a foundation course in brachytherapy would be useful as many radiographers do not have this included in their training now. Louise told the group about the modules she has completed at Edinburgh University, including vaginal vault insertions and ultrasound guided gynae brachytherapy. Pauline informed the group that there will be an MSc Brachytherapy module at Bristol (University of the West of England) hopefully in March 2011. It was agreed that members should send appropriate course details to Clare Wilkinson to collate and disseminate to the group.

8. Open discussion re vault insertions. Radiographers shared experiences and training required to carry out vaginal vault insertions. Many centres now having radiographer-led services, for either subsequent insertions or all vault insertions. Imaging was discussed. Louise Bleakley asked for a show of hands for which centres are imaging and what modality.

6 centres not imaging, 3 using CT imaging, 1 using c-arm imaging

9. Discussion re emergency procedures, raised by Cathy Taylor due to concerns re HDR prostate brachytherapy

10. Next meeting- provisional date of Wednesday 8th June 2011. Glenda Logsdail offered to host this at Northampton.