

CTRad bulletin

Welcome to our new consumer members

- A warm welcome to three new consumer members who were appointed in March 2011: Mrs Hilary Blackburn (workstream [WS]1 and Executive Group), Mr Richard Stephens (WS3) and Mrs Hilary Stobart (WS4).
- On 15 August 2011 an educational visit was organised for CTRad consumers to tour the facilities of the Christie Hospital, Manchester, to get up to speed with the latest treatment technology. The morning started with overview talks given by experts in the centre; in the afternoon attendees were taken on a tour of the radiotherapy planning room, meeting with physicists and radiographers to see how technology is helping to improve the dose given to patients and to tackle motion issues. They were privileged to see literally 'behind the scenes' of a linear accelerator being commissioned.
- Attendees thought it was a very useful day from all perspectives, the discussion was dynamic and they could see the increasing role of radiographers. It did reinforce the feeling that there is a general lack of awareness of how radiotherapy has moved on, and prompted the consumers to consider what they can do to help get the positive message across.

UK Radiation Oncology (UKRO) Conference and Academic Meeting, April 2011

- Following the close of the UKRO Conference, CTRad and the Royal College of Radiologists (RCR) organised a meeting looking at ways to support and encourage clinical oncology trainees who wish to pursue an academic career, detailing 'The Why, What and How of Research'. It was hosted by Tim Illidge and Di Gilson (Warden of the Faculty of Clinical Oncology, RCR). CTRad is looking at further ways to collaborate with RCR in the future.

Meeting with Manufacturers, May 2011

- Thanks to Martin Robinson (WS4) for organising a successful meeting with radiotherapy equipment manufacturers, including dosimetry and planning systems, on 20 May as a step forward for engagement and initiation of dialogue. Talks were given by Tim Illidge, Ran Mackay, David Scott from the Association of Healthcare Technology Providers for Imaging, Radiotherapy and Care (AXrEM), Tim Maughan and Sir Mike Richards.
- There was active discussion about areas of common interest such as radiotherapy awareness. It became clear that further interactions would be required with individual companies to take this forward. It was noted that the financial structure and cash flow of manufacturers is very different to the pharmaceutical industry, and they do not have the same ability to fund research projects.
- Also arising from the discussion was the possibility for manufacturers to be represented within CTRad. The consensus was to invite manufacturer representatives to apply to CTRad competitively and be appointed based on the fit of their CV and research credentials. As a result, Kevin Brown from Elekta has now joined WS4 and we welcome him as a new member.



Association for Radiation Research (ARR) meeting, June – July 2011

- CTRad sponsored a session at the ARR meeting (28 June – 1 July) in Nottingham, led by Kai Rothkamm who gave a talk on ‘Cytogenetic and DNA damage biomarkers for assessing radiation exposure and effect’. It was well received and the meeting generated good discussion.

Radiotherapy Physics think tank meeting, July 2011

- An academic radiotherapy physics think tank meeting was held on 4 July at the Institute of Physics, to bring the physics research community together and to begin to develop plans for progressing the national research agenda.
- Ran MacKay (WS4) led the day starting with short presentations highlighting the current state of play, opportunities and current problems facing this research community. The 23 participating centres were required to submit proformas and SWOT analyses of their current situation; it became clear through the day that departments are structured very differently, with highly variable capacity for research. Delegates were asked to rank barriers to radiotherapy physics research, and protected research time emerged as the overwhelming concern.
- A report of the meeting including recommendations is being drafted for publication. Delegates found the wide-ranging presentations stimulating and thought-provoking. Topics of particular interest included:
 - Centres’ structure and their links with university departments
 - Expansion in clinical services resulting in strain on staffing
 - The lack of dedicated and protected research time for radiotherapy physicists
 - The need to clarify the academic training route and career structure of academic physicists
 - Eligibility issues with current funding streams
 - A need to promote their department’s work locally and develop internal collaborations.

National Collaboration Workshops 2011

- CTRad has again invited experts to host workshops to bring together clinicians and scientists working in radiation biology and oncology, to foster collaboration in order to initiate translational research:
 - Imaging in radiotherapy research (Kaye Williams WS1) 4 Oct 2011
 - SBRT in unresectable liver metastases (Maria Hawkins WS 4) 5 Dec 2011
 - Tumour microenvironment and signal transduction (Thomas Brunner WS1) 20 Dec 2011
- If you are interested in joining any of these workshops, please contact Carolyn Chan.

Forthcoming activities

- Don Jones (WS1) is leading on a biomarkers workshop, planned for 23 April 2012. The meeting will promote the inclusion of quality biomarker translational research in radiotherapy trials, and to provide a forum to exchange ideas.
- David Sebag-Montefiore (WS3) and Tim Maughan (Executive Group) are planning a one-day radiotherapy trial development workshop in 2012, to support and educate junior investigators. The programme will include an overview of the trial process, design and strategy, compiling the right questions, working with CSGs and collaborators and drafting applications. More details will be released in due course.

Contact us

If you have any feedback or want to find out more about topics mentioned above, please contact either your workstream co-chair or Carolyn Chan (carolyn.chan@ncri.org.uk); you can also browse the CTRad website <http://www.ncri.org.uk/ctrad> for more information and future dates of CTRad proposal reviewing meetings.

National Cancer Research Institute

Angel Building, 407 St John Street, London, EC1V 4AD

tel: +44(0)20 3469 8460 fax: +44(0)20 3014 7658 info@ncri.org.uk www.ncri.org.uk