

ESTRO: A REGIONAL ONCOLOGY SOCIETY ON THE MOVE

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ESTRO, founded in 1982, has stimulated and coached the emergence of radiation oncology as a separate in Europe. Its growth was organical and driven by the pioneer spirit, vision and energy of its "founding fathers". In 1997, 15 years later, the Society counts more than 4 000 members and represents the vast majority of European professionals active in the field of radiation oncology. At this historical moment ESTRO is doing some deep soul searching to find out whether its present structure, goals and activities are still adequate to face up to the challenges of the 21st century, to streamline an interactive communications with its members and provide the guidance and services rightfully expected from it in a region rapidly converging towards a new European space.

In a "conclave" - type meeting in a former monastery in Italy a group of young members were brought together to put under scrutiny 8 areas considered to be of major importance to the Society, to assess the present status and explore new paths, horizons and boundaries. The Board joined them later to listen to their criticism and capture their audacious dream and projects. Will the Society be able to produce the power of imagination required to set free, harness and tap this powerful stream of new energy? Will it be able to generate the resources to deliver on the vast range of expectations of a new generation of members who, it is hoped, have served as an unprejudiced and candid mouthpiece of its membership at large.

PROBLEMS IN CARRYING OUT THE PROSPECTIVE CLINICAL TRIAL OF III rd PHASE

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In 1994 the project multicenter studies has been elaborated.

Objectives

Implementation of QA standards in radiotherapy of laryngeal carcinoma irradiated in eight radiotherapy centers (multicenter study) in Poland.

The elaboration of study design and practical implementation of multicenter prospective studies (clinical trial).

Rationale

The QA standards are at present most important subject of activities in radiotherapy both in practice and in research. The improvement in QA can result in improvement of the outcomes of treatment and decrease the risk of postirradiation damage.

The retrospective analyses of several materials of head and neck cancers treated with irradiation indicated the detrimental effect of prolongation of overall-treatment-time.

The numerical values of this effect presented in the literature are often in disagreement with clinical every-day experience. The elucidation of this problem in prospective studies (clinical trial) can be of cognitive and practical value.

It is the first attempt in organizing clinical trial on such a scale in Polish radiotherapy. The participating centers give the radiotherapy services to the population of about 20 mln. people.

The problems in collecting data to hold out the standards in documentation, in follow-up and benefits observed in the mid-course of this study will be discussed.