Conclusions: Our data suggest that SCRT followed by delayed surgery (1 week) is well tolerated. However, beyond the 2-3 week toxicity increases and may require medical treatment at the hospital. SCRT and delayed surgery (4-8 weeks after radiotherapy) may improve outcomes, but the acute toxicity of these patients should be carefully evaluated.

EP-1678

Practice Guidelines skin care advice for patients undergoing radical external beam megavoltage radiotherapy

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A Guideline Development Group have reviewed the current evidence to assist radiographers, radiotherapy nurses, and the wider radiotherapy workforce, to give the optimal skin care advice to patients undergoing radical external beam megavoltage radiotherapy. Although it is unlikely that radiation reactions can be completely prevented, the current driver is to delay the onset and minimise the severity of a skin reaction, to reduce symptom related discomfort, and prevent further complications.

Results: The recommendation from the guidance document is to standardise skin care education of all staff caring for patients receiving radiotherapy by dissemination of the guidance using a variety of educational methods.

Conclusions: Standardise assessment tools across departments which are objective and consistent. Consider the evidence on current products and start new high quality trials to investigate interventions for dry or moist desquamation enabling a more consistent approach for patients receiving radiotherapy and inform radiotherapy skin care guidelines.

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Nurse advice for carers of patients undergoing radiotherapy

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Purpose/Objective: Given that radiotherapy is usually an outpatient treatment, the nurse has to provide the patient and the carer the necessary information and support to resolve the process positively and to jointly elaborate a plan for cures adapted to the various situations, which the patient will be undergoing.

The carer is usually someone from the family, a neighbour or a friend without specific training, who will become key to the link between the patient and the nurse.

In this paper, we would like to measure the degree of satisfaction of the task of the carer during the treatment and also to receive feedback for the response they have received from the nurse.

To improve the healing of the patient.

- To detect early problems encountered related to the patient's illness.
To assess the carer on how to face complex situations and prompt decision making.

Materials and Methods: During the consultation process with the nurse from the Radiotherapy Oncology Department, an initial interview takes place with the patient and the carer in order to collect all necessary information according to the patient’s needs -which can be changed accordingly during the process of the treatment. It is also put in practice active listening, empathy, assertive communication and positivism to lessen the emotional tension. We train with the basic needs, observation of alert symptoms and medication. We program pre-arranged appointments, foreseeing possible unplanned visits.

At the end of the treatment the carer will receive a feedback form with the aim of understanding and knowing the degree of satisfaction by the service received.

In this paper we present the results of 50 surveys received during March 2014 and March 2015.

Results:

Table 1. - Survey findings
Findings (see Table 1) obtained in the surveys show that: 90% of the carers have received the information of the treatment and the possible consequences in a clear and understandable manner.

93% of the carers have found the information received very useful to take better care of the patient.

83.3% of the carers say that the nurse consultation has provided reassurance, serenity, and a sufficient emotional space to take better care of the patient.

90% of the carers believe that their participation has helped positively towards the tolerance of the patient regarding the treatment.

We can finally say that 100% of the carers surveyed believe in the importance of team work between patient-carer-nurse. Therefore, the carer has felt supported by the nurse consultation and 100% believe that the outcome has been very positive.

Conclusions: Our survey results show that the training to careers by the nurse station has been well received by them. They have found the advice highly effective in improving the patient care both physical and psychological during the treatment.

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Does access to online resources affect patient satisfaction and understanding of radiotherapy treatment?

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Purpose/Objective: Internet use is increasingly common, and one challenge faced by medical professionals is to help guide patients towards reputable sources of information online to avoid mis-information or undue anxiety. Centre-specific websites have been developed at a number of large oncology centres to help guide patients. We aim to determine if access to these resources has any impact upon patient satisfaction or understanding of their treatment.

Materials and Methods: 360 patients across 7 radiotherapy units in the East of England Cancer Network completed a postal patient satisfaction survey following their radiotherapy treatment. Questions covered levels of pre-treatment understanding, use of oncology center websites and satisfaction of treatment. The answers to these questions were compared.

Results: 281/360 (78%) responded regarding website use and of these 76/281 (27%) confirmed use of websites. 95% of website users stated that they found the information available useful or very useful. When assessed against age, 22% of responders over the age of 65 used cancer center websites, whilst 25% of those under 65 accessed the sites. For those patients who did use websites, 66% completely understood their treatment and 68% of those who did not use websites understood completely. Reported awareness of side effects was 74% in those who used websites, and 80% in those who did not. Overall satisfaction in levels of information pre-treatment was rated ‘excellent’ in 62% of website users, and 48% of non-users. Finally, overall care rating was equal in the two groups with a 76% of patients in each group giving their overall care a rating of ‘excellent’.

Conclusions: Internet use is more common in younger patients, and those patients who use website on the whole find them useful. Use of cancer center websites appears to improve patient satisfaction with the amount of information they receive pre-treatment. Website use does not appear to have any impact upon satisfaction as a whole or on patients overall understanding of treatment or side effects. Whilst it is important to provide patients with access to online resources, further research is required to determine what patients want from these resources and whether being able to access these resources has any impact upon patient’s long term expectations of radiotherapy treatment.