

Letter to the Editor

In Regard to Hesse et al

Bilal Mazhar Qureshi, FCPS, Maria Tariq, MBBS,*
Agha Muhammad Hammad Khan, FCPS, Nasir Ali, FCPS, Asim Hafiz, FCPS,
Sehrish Abrar, FCPS, and Ahmed Nadeem Abbasi, FFRRCSI



Department of Oncology, Radiation Oncology Section, the Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

To the Editor:

Our team of residents and faculty have reviewed Hesse et al.'s work on peer review in head and neck cancer with great interest.¹ Peer review is indeed an essential component of quality assurance in radiation oncology. We, as part of a Joint Commission International Accredited tertiary care university hospital have been extensively practicing and publishing on peer review in radiation treatment planning.²

Our team would like to applaud the authors for publishing this study and share our experience in this regard. Our peer review meetings were conducted weekly until 2019,² but identifying the need of more frequent evaluation of contours for cases which require prompt planning, we have now switched to a daily peer review meeting model. Overall treatment time is a potential factor for outcome in head and neck cancers, therefore, it is crucial to keep the delays in treatment initiation as short as reasonably achievable and expedite treatment planning.³

During COVID-19 pandemic, inter and intradepartmental meetings were conducted online,⁴ which led to a hybrid meeting model, still practiced daily with better meeting attendance alongside busy clinical schedules and avoiding treatment initiation delays. This also ensures better compliance with the guidelines of discussing every plan before the first fraction is being delivered.⁵

Our team finds Jennifer Hesse and coauthors weekly volume round as a commendable effort, but we believe that it is imperative to consider daily volume rounds for a prompt and more efficient patient centered approach. Expert comment from the author and its feasibility at their institute will be appreciated.

References

1. Hesse J, Chen L, Yu Y, et al. Peer review of head and neck cancer planning target volumes in radiation oncology. *Adv Radiat Oncol.* 2022;7: 100917.
2. Qureshi BM, Mansha MA, Karim MU, et al. Impact of peer review in the radiation treatment planning process: Experience of a tertiary care university hospital in Pakistan. *J Glob Oncol.* 2019;5:1–7.
3. Mackillop WJ, Bates JH, O'Sullivan B, Withers HR. The effect of delay in treatment on local control by radiotherapy. *Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys.* 1996;34:243–250.
4. Abbasi AN, Abrar S, Khan BM. The impact of COVID-19 on the workflow of radiation oncology facility in a tertiary referral Joint Commission of International Accreditation (JCIA) accredited university hospital in Pakistan. *Turkish J Oncol.* 2021;36:247–249.
5. The Royal College of Radiologists. Radiotherapy target volume definition and peer review – RCR guidance. Available at: https://www.rcr.ac.uk/system/files/publication/field_publication_files/bfco172_peer_review_outlining.pdf. Accessed February 28, 2022.

Sources of support: This work had no specific funding.

Disclosures: none.

*Corresponding author: Maria Tariq, MBBS; E-mail: mariatariq93@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adro.2022.100963>

2452-1094/© 2022 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Inc. on behalf of American Society for Radiation Oncology. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).