

Imaging for Target Volume Determination in Radiotherapy

Beijing, China
20-24 April, 2008

Course Director:... **Dr Vincent Khoo**

Target volume delineation is always an important issue for radio-oncologists, especially in 3D treatment. That is why I was so excited to attend this ESTRO course held in China and I certainly learnt a lot.

The course began with the basic concept of GTV and CTV. This was followed by the professors discussing target volumes for each tumour including lung, prostate, oesophagus, breast, stomach and head and neck cancers. The course did not focus only on how to delineate the target volume but also why and a lot of new and useful evidence from randomised clinical trials was discussed.

The most interesting part was the case discussion. The students were asked to delineate the target volume in four real cases for which the details had been provided as part of the pre-course material. When a particular topic finished, the relevant case was discussed. The tutors, including one radiologist, one radio-oncologist and one physicist, revealed the target volume determined by each student, the groups and the teachers in sequence. The large difference between the results from individual students always led to an outburst of well-meaning laughter but the teachers themselves were not always able to agree on similar target-volume delineations in some of the cases that were discussed. The radiologist and the radio-oncologist helped me to think a problem through thoroughly to reach my own answer and by sharing their specialist knowledge and expertise they helped us to think for ourselves. In target volume delineation, there is no absolute right answer and the value of this course came from the opportunity to sit down together and discuss our differing approaches, learn from each other and reach objective and balanced conclusions.

As one of the translators at the course, I had many opportunities to work with the professors. I was impressed by their commitment to every aspect of the course. To make sure our translations were correct, they spent a lot of time with us and corrected the slides one by one. None of them complained about this extra work! Although for most of them this was their first visit to China, they stayed in the conference hall throughout the whole course, even when they were not actively involved in teaching, listening keenly to their fellow professors' presentations. But of course when the conference was over, they went to the Great Wall, the symbol of China, and had a lot of fun!

Thanks to the ESTRO staff, the course directors and everyone worked on this course. It was not an easy programme to run and you made it a huge success. We hope to welcome you to China again!

Yu Tang
Beijing, China

Imaging for Target Volume Determination in Radiotherapy

Beijing, China
20-24 April, 2008

Course Director:... **Dr Vincent Khoo**

If you want to experience the adventure of international travel, if you want to give of yourself for a very rewarding return, and if you want to learn from real experts' lessons such that you may have to start catching up fast, then a successful international teaching course will be of help as one of your dream weavers. The ESTRO teaching course on Imaging for Target Volume Determination held in Beijing this April was that resource offering us a fast and effective way to meet our continuing education needs.

The course was held at the Cancer Hospital of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences (CAMS), which had just celebrated the 50th anniversary of its foundation. It is one of the largest radiation centres in China with advanced equipment. This course was the third ESTRO teaching course held in China and was very special in the history of ESTRO because there more than four hundred participants which is more than on any previous course.

The course started on Sunday morning after a welcome address and introduction from the Course Director, Vincent Khoo. During the four-and-a-half day programme, several topics were developed around imaging techniques and radiotherapy treatment planning, as well as target volume determination for different cancers. The course focused on two main aims: the first was to explore state-of-the-art imaging modalities and their role in defining primary tumours for target volume determination. The second aim was to look at the diagnosis-therapy interface and new imaging technologies, including image registration and verification studies to determine margins for the PTV. Instruction, experience, service and reflection were combined to create a model that supports radiation oncologists, physicists and diagnostic radiologists ensuring a multidisciplinary setting.

For me, the most impressive part was the clinical case discussions and the target volume determining exercises. We engaged in an excellent exchange of clinical experiences with colleagues from around the world so that we could see the similarities and differences in radiation therapy between different hospitals and different countries. The teachers also provided their own experience for the target determination of these cases. Then they explained why the target volume was determined like this, using the anatomical basis as well as the clinical evidence.

This was a successful and informative teaching course. We thank all our ESTRO teachers for their responsible attitude, detailed preparation and elaborate presentations. We are also grateful for the excellent organisation of the course. It was a life-changing experience. All of us were in the right place at the right time and we look forward to more and more ESTRO courses in China.

BI Nan
Beijing, China