



SCHOOL

Course Report

Comprehensive and Practical Brachytherapy

9 – 13 February 2020, Brussels, Belgium

Course director

Bradley Pieters, Radiation oncologist, Amsterdam University Medical Centers, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Could you please briefly introduce yourself?

I am a medical physicist undergoing training which I will complete in six months. I am based at Odense University Hospital, Denmark. My interests in the field of radiotherapy are broad, and I have yet to settle in an area after the training is done.

Why did you choose to attend this course?

As mentioned earlier, I am in training and brachytherapy is part of my training. In our clinic, we only treat female pelvic cancers with brachytherapy, and this course seemed like a perfect opportunity to be more enlightened in the brachytherapy field. Thereby I would also expand my knowledge regarding radiotherapy.

What aspects of the course were the most interesting and why?

The obvious answer is the physics and statistics-related material during the course, but I also developed an interest in the brachytherapy field, application-wise. The possibilities of sparing tissue by implanting some needles and allowing a wire with a radioactive source to run through it – it is amazing! The very neat part of this course was that the teachers were like a cornucopia of knowledge, so a lot of the questions received really good answers.

Did the course activities improve your knowledge and skills in the relevant subject?

They did, so much! They broadened my knowledge about the benefits and potential pitfalls of brachytherapy, specifically when the teachers brought up some of their relevant articles and experience in the field.

The material was well balanced with a sufficient amount of material for each participating group (physicists, physicians and radiotherapists). I enjoyed the material that wasn't aimed directly towards me. It was presented in such a way that I could still understand it.

Did the course meet your expectations? If so, how?

It did, and it also exceeded them. I wasn't sure what to expect; before I came, I read some guidelines and brachytherapy-related material and was introduced to the subject by my clinic. The course fully covered all of that knowledge and added more. During the session, a lot of good recommendations related to study material also came up.

List three important 'takeaways' following the course

- Radiotherapy is a dynamic speciality, which has many facets and treatment options;
- Communication is the key to the selection of good treatment in the sense of discussing circumstances; and
- The brachytherapy field has many applications and with 3D-printed applicators, it is becoming more advanced.

How will what you have learnt be implemented in your daily job/ clinical practice?

For now, there won't be any implementation since we only have one room available and a pulsed dose rate (PDR) machine. We are moving to new facilities in the future and there might be openings for new treatment areas.

How would you encourage someone who has never been to an ESTRO Course to join this course next year/ in two years?

It offers the possibility to attend a well-structured course with refined material, especially to broaden aspects of brachytherapy in comparison with External Beam Radiation Therapy (EBRT).



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Course Participants

