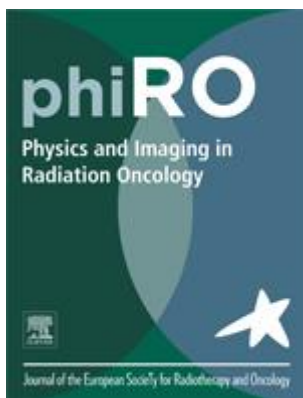




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Interview with Daniela Thorwarth, Co-Editor-in-Chief of the phiRO journal



<https://www.phiro.science/>

What is the scope of the journal (and what is the difference between it and other European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) journals)?

Physics and Imaging in Radiation Oncology (phiRO) is a scientific open-access journal that publishes original contributions and short communications as well as review articles from medical physics and medical imaging that are focused on topics related to radiation oncology (www.phiro.science). It is an official publication of ESTRO, as are *Radiotherapy and Oncology*, *Clinical and Translational Radiation Oncology (ctRO)* and *Technical Innovations and Patient Support in Radiation Oncology (tipsRO)*. Since *phiRO* is an open access journal, all articles can be downloaded free of charge.

When was the journal founded?

phiRO was founded in 2017.

Have you published some special issues (or do you have plans to in the future)? What were the topics?

We have published four special issues in the past on the following topics:

CT developments regarding dose calculations in treatment planning in radiotherapy (guest editors: Wouter van Elmpt (The Netherlands) and Guillaume Landry (Germany)); Physics highlights of ESTRO37 (editor: Ludvig Muren (Denmark)); Functional imaging for prostate cancer (guest editors: Anca-Ligia Grosu (Germany) and Uulke van der Heide (The Netherlands)); and dosimetry auditing (guest editors: Catharine Clark (UK) and Nuria Jornet Sala (Spain)).

Currently two new special issues are being edited on physics highlights of ESTRO2020 (edited by Ludvig Muren (Denmark) and Daniela Thorwarth (Germany)) and on magnetic resonance in radiotherapy "MRinRT" (guest editors: Oliver Jäkel (Germany) and Jürgen Debus (Germany)).

Have you published review articles? What were the topics?

So far only two review articles have been published in phiRO: in issue 9 (2018) by Olsson et al. on “Basic concepts and applications of functional magnetic resonance imaging for radiotherapy of prostate cancer”, and in issue 8 (2018) by Zamboglou et al. on “Multimodal imaging for radiation therapy planning in patients with primary prostate cancer”.

How many rounds of reviews does it typically take for papers to be accepted?

Similarly to the procedures that are followed in other scientific journals, manuscripts are sent out to two to three reviewers. Following this expert review process, the authors are asked to amend their manuscript according to the reviewers' comments. Dependent on the level of changes, a second round of review might be necessary before a final decision on acceptance can be made.

What can I do if I feel that the reviews or the editorial decision have been unfair (how to appeal a rejection)?

In general, several experts in the field are asked to review a submitted manuscript thoroughly. Based on their decisions, the editor-in-chief takes a final decision. If the authors feel that the reasons for rejection and the decision taken by the editor are not fair, they can contact the editor-in-chief.

How should I address reviews that “missed the point”? Or when reviewers are contradicting each other?

During the revision of a manuscript you are asked to answer reviewers' comments in detailed point-by-point answers. This is the place to react to reviewers' opinions and try to argue in what way a reviewer has missed the point. This applies also to reviewers who contradict each other. In this point-by-point answer letter, you should clarify your stand point and argue your case as to why you followed the arguments of one reviewer but not of the other. However, it is always advisable to think carefully about all the issues that are raised by reviewers and to consider changing those aspects of the manuscript accordingly. Answers to reviewers should provide “objective” arguments.

Besides novelty and impact, what are you looking for in particular in a full-length article (perhaps minimum cohort size, statistics...)?

Indeed, the most important factors we are looking for in original papers are novelty and impact. However, secondary factors, such as sample size, statistical analysis and a sound data analysis methodology, are extremely important to produce a good paper. Furthermore, we try to communicate to the authors that the style of writing and results presentation is a key factor in high-quality scientific publications. Recently, for medical physics papers, ethics statements have become required if any kind of patient material is involved (also for retrospective data analysis).

What are your most important tips for good figures and for good tables?

The most important factor regarding figures and tables is the clarity of the presented information. In figures, it is important that the information given is complementary to what is provided in the text. The figure should contain a clear message, readable data and information, a large enough point size for graphs and text so that the information can be read clearly as well as a meaningful figure legend. Furthermore, all information that is not absolutely necessary needs to be removed.

The same applies to tables. These should contain relevant information in a clear and structured presentation style.

What advice would you give first-time authors?

Read a few good papers to provide orientation. Start with writing the materials & methods and results sections, then the introduction and discussion. Write the abstract at the end. It might be useful to take an introductory course on scientific writing. Most importantly: ask your mentor or supervisor to help you!



What should be in supplementary materials? What are the criteria?

All information that is not directly necessary to the reader in order to understand the main methods and most important analysis steps can often be moved to a supplementary materials section. In the supplement, material that details certain aspects or clarifies specific aspects is presented.

What should we do if we have an idea for writing a review paper; how should we contact the editors about it?

The most efficient way to discuss an idea for a review paper is to approach the editor-in-chief directly via email.

What is your vision for this journal in five to 10 years?

My vision for *phiRO* in five to 10 years is that by that time it will be a well-established open-access journal in the field of medical physics among other traditional medical physics journals. It will be selected by many researchers as a first choice for the submission of their original research data for publication.

I look forward to receiving your medical physics and medical imaging submissions to *phiRO* soon!



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