

Deficiencies common in radiation therapy trial reports for Hodgkin's, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

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Reporting of radiation therapy details in randomized controlled trials for Hodgkin's and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma is deficient due to a lack of reporting of key radiation therapy descriptors and quality assurance processes designed to ensure the accuracy and reproducibility of treatment regimens, according to a February 1 study in the *International Journal of Radiation Oncology*Biology*Physics*, the official journal of the American Society for Radiation Oncology.

Randomized controlled trial reports are the primary source of trial documentation that is available to clinicians and patients, and complete descriptions of the therapies used are necessary for proper interpretation and replication of the trials.

In 1996 the Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials statement was developed to ensure that future readers of a trial report were able to draw informed conclusions about the accuracy and validity of trials. However, there has been little research on how oncology trials are reported.

As a result, researchers from the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center Department of Radiation Oncology in New York sought to determine the quality of radiation therapy reporting in randomized controlled trials involving Hodgkin's and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

The study authors reviewed 61 trial reports that were published between 1998 and 2007 and assessed them for the presence of six quality measure: target volume, radiation dose, fractionation, radiation prescription, quality assurance process use and adherence to quality assurance.

Only one-third of the reports described radiation target volume, only 20 percent described using a quality assurance process and 11 percent described adherence to quality assurance.

"Inadequate reporting of radiation therapy details was found regardless of disease stage, cooperative group sponsorship, journal of publication or country of origin," Justin E. Bekelman, M.D., lead author of the study who is now an assistant professor of radiation oncology at the University of Pennsylvania, said.

The study authors also suggested that consensus standards for radiation therapy reporting should be developed and integrated into the peer-review process.

Source: American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology

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