

TARGETING CANCER

Linking rural communities to local cancer treatment

Dr Gina Hesselberg & Dr Sean Hassan



CANCER & RADIATION THERAPY: WE CAN DO BETTER



- ▶ Cancer incidence steadily rising

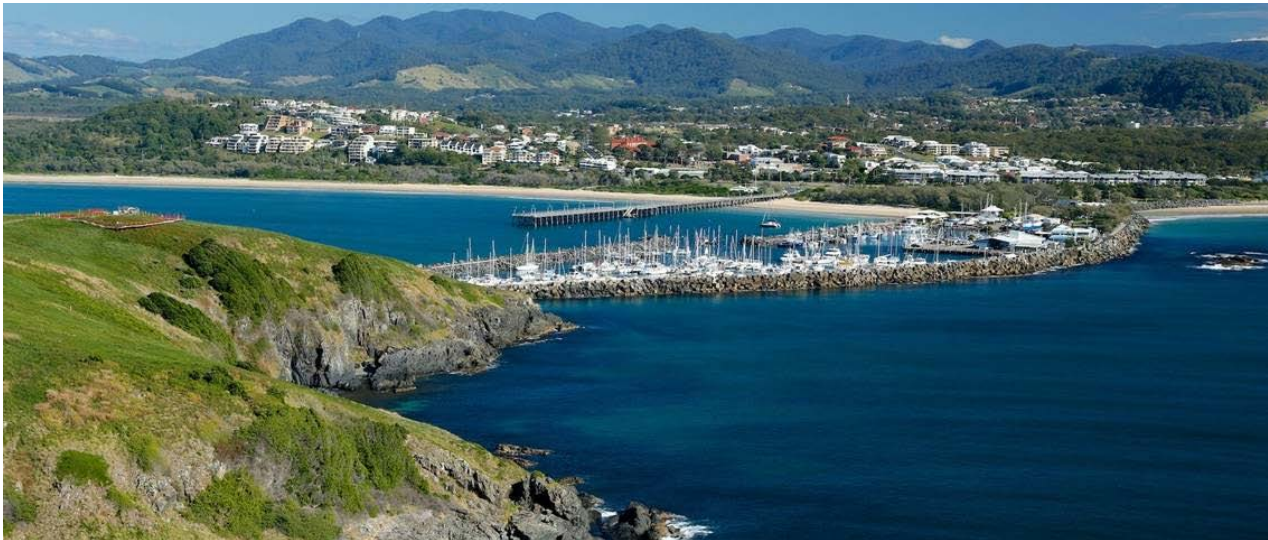


- ▶ Radiation therapy is safe, cheap, quick and effective



- ▶ Radiation therapy would benefit 1 in 2 patients
- ▶ Radiation therapy is underutilised

- ▶ 1 in 3 metropolitan patients receive RT
- ▶ 1 in 5 rural/remote patients receive RT



- ▶ <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5662953>
- ▶ http://cdn1.buuteeq.com/upload/25236/coffs-harbour-jetty-2.jpg.1140x481_default.jpg

RADIATION THERAPY FOR SKIN CANCERS



- ▶ > 2 in 3 Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer before the age of 70



- ▶ The most common malignancy in Australia
 - ▶ 750,000 people are treated for one or more skin cancers each year
- ▶ Radiation therapy has been used for treating skin cancers >100 years. Now often underutilised

RADIATION THERAPY FOR SKIN CANCERS



- ▶ Majority of skin cancers managed surgically
- ▶ Key role of Radiation Therapy



- ▶ Outcomes with radiation therapy:
 - ▶ Usually considered to be equivalent to surgery
 - ▶ Cure rates: 86 - 97%
 - ▶ Recurrence rate 7.3%
 - ▶ >90% will have good or excellent cosmesis



Clinical Radiation Oncology 4th Edition. Gunderson & Tepper. Chapter 41: Cutaneous Carcinoma page 773



Clinical Radiation Oncology 4th Edition. Gunderson & Tepper. Chapter 41: Cutaneous Carcinoma page 765

RADIATION THERAPY FOR PROSTATE CANCER

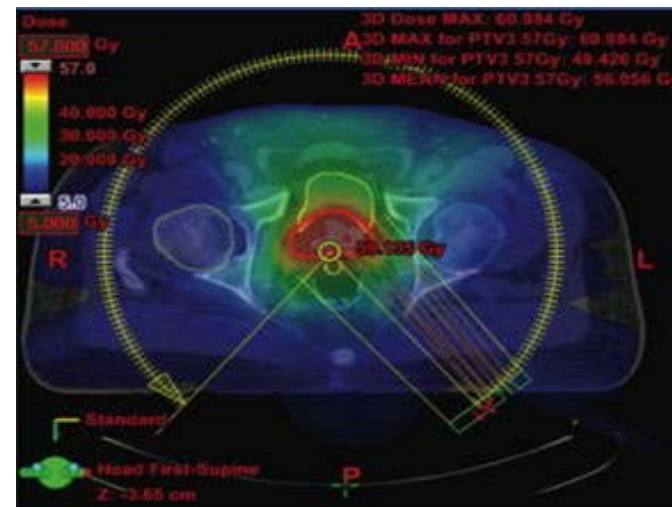
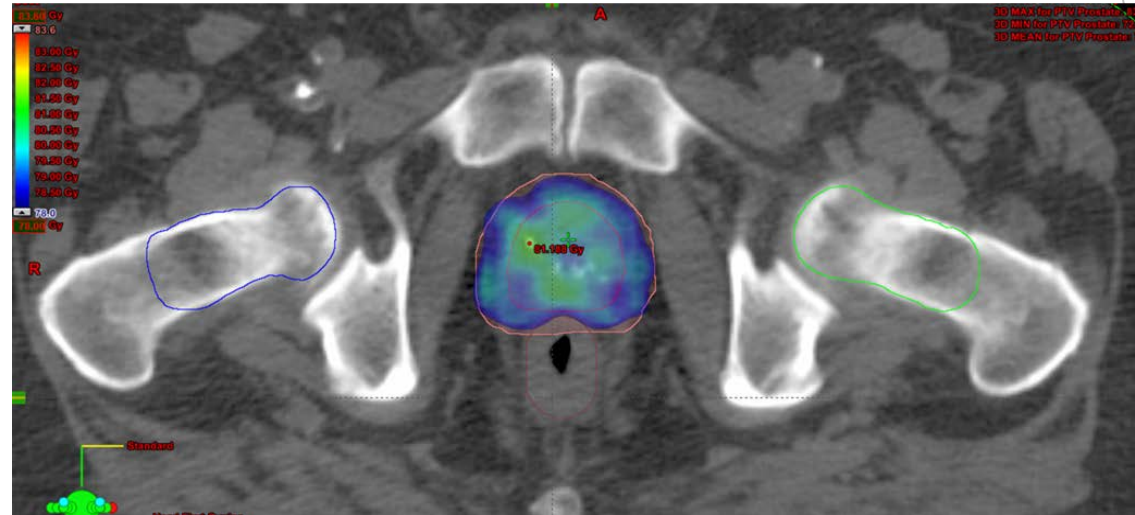
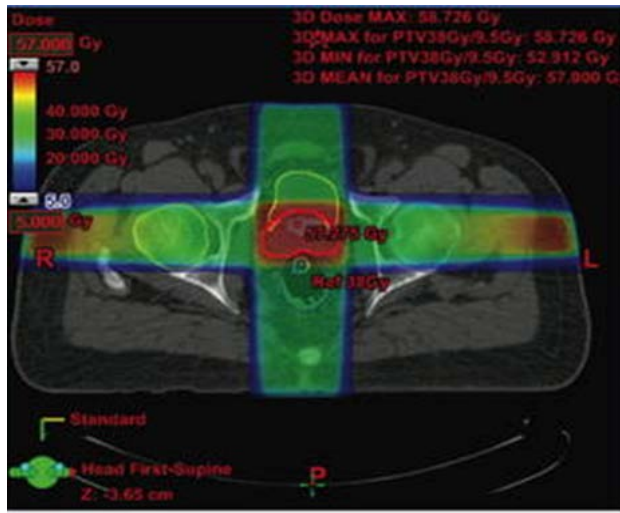


- ▶ Men are **not fully informed** of all options



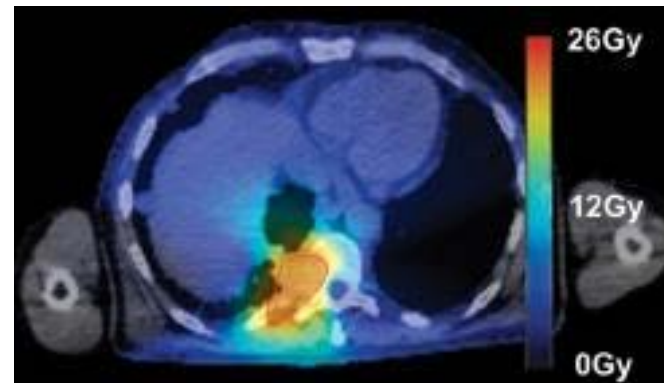
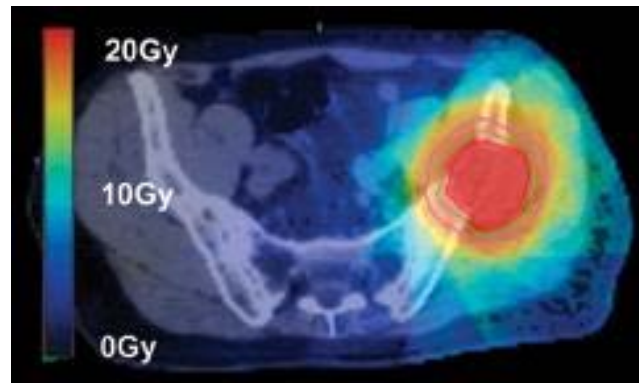
- ▶ Robust evidence:
 - ▶ radiation therapy and surgery have **equal cure rates**
 - ▶ overall similar quality of life equivalent (different side effect profiles)
 - ▶ RT: non-invasive, often free
 - ▶ 4 week v. 8 week option

RADIATION THERAPY FOR PROSTATE CANCER



RADIATION THERAPY FOR BONE METASTASES

- ▶ pain response rates 60%
- ▶ complete pain response > 30%
- ▶ Minimal toxicity



RURAL & REMOTE GPs & PATIENTS

GPs play a crucial role in cancer management:



- ▶ *Time of initial diagnosis*
- ▶ *Assisting work-up*
- ▶ *Follow-up*
- ▶ *Transition to survivorship or palliative care*

Helping patients who are presented with two treatment options to decide on the best treatment for them.

RURAL & REMOTE GPs & PATIENTS

Depending on the clinical scenario, RT may have an important role in:

- ▶ Definitive (primary/radical) e.g. prostate
- ▶ Adjuvant (post op) e.g. breast
- ▶ Neo-adjuvant (pre op) e.g. rectal
- ▶ Combined with chemotherapy (concurrent) e.g. head/neck
- ▶ Palliative e.g. bone pain

RURAL & REMOTE GPs & PATIENTS

BARRIERS TO RADIATION THERAPY

- ▶ Rural patients:
 - ▶ Distance to RT centres
 - ▶ Limited access to treatment
 - ▶ Time away from home
- ▶ For all patients:
 - ▶ Treatment misconceptions
 - ▶ Inadequate exposure and training of medical students, GPs, specialists
- ▶ GPs can refer direct to RO

WHAT CAN WE DO TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION?

- ▶ Seek more information:
 - ▶ Targeting Cancer Website <https://www.targetingcancer.com.au/>
 - ▶ Interactive GP resources
 - ▶ Interactive map- closest centre
 - ▶ Speak to us/ contact us
 - ▶ Gina Hesselberg ginahesselberg@gmail.com
 - ▶ Sean Hassan seanhassan@mac.com
 - ▶ Cards/Brochure hand outs
- ▶ Primary Health Network HealthPathways



Treatment Centres

News



For GPs

Search



Is radiation therapy an option for you?

Ask your doctor

News & Media

My prostate cancer journey so far: Mark's experience with radiation therapy

In 2015, I was a 52 year old happily married father of four, with a great job as a fireman, in good health and enjoying life. I had had regular physical check ups, including PSA blood tests for prostate cancer. I had no symptoms that would ...

5 things to expect and ways to prepare for your radiation therapy

As we've previously discussed, there are many myths and misconceptions about radiation therapy, ...

[Learn more »](#)





About Radiation Oncology

What is Radiation Oncology?

What is Radiation Therapy?

Benefits and Effectiveness

Side Effects

Treatment Process

Radiation Oncology Team

Radiation Oncologists

Radiation Therapists

Radiation Oncology
Medical Physicists

Radiation Oncology
Nurses

Home > What is Radiation Oncology? > For GPs and other Health Professionals

For GPs and other Health Professionals



The incidence of cancer is rising in Australia and co-ordination of care between health professionals is essential. This section is aimed at providing information on **radiation therapy** (also called radiotherapy) for any health professional involved in a patient's cancer care with a particular focus on primary care providers.

Treatment Centres



To find your nearest radiation therapy centre, enter your address or postcode below and click on the submit button for more details.

 Australia  New Zealand  Use your current location  Reset

Address

City

Search by city 

Radius

50 km 

Find location



THANK YOU

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