

Editorial

A warm welcome to the third issue in volume 3 of the *Journal of Radiotherapy in Practice*. As Editors, we have the enviable task of selecting articles from a wide range of subject areas and we very much enjoy presenting the author's research and findings to promote and enhance evidence based practice.

In this edition we also present abstracts from papers presented at the Radiotherapy in Practice Conference, held in Sheffield, September 2003. Attendance at this Conference provided an opportunity for delegates to gain academic credit for attendance; this will support practitioners in being able to demonstrate an evidence-based and reflective approach to their practice. As mandatory continuing professional development becomes a reality, documenting and providing evidence of learning and development will become essential.

In the first of the papers presented in this issue, Probst, Holmes and Dodwell present their research and findings from investigating radiotherapy waiting times, resources and protocols for breast cancer in the UK's radiotherapy centres. The findings are interesting and provide evidence of diversity in waiting times and clinical practice including a variation of staffing levels per head of population.

For those of you who are interested in the quality assurance of advanced conformal radiotherapy delivery methods, the second paper by Liney, Heathcote, Jenner, Turnbull and Beavis will be of interest. The authors describe the feasibility of using a polymer-based tissue equivalent gel for measuring radiation doses in situ for absolute radiation dose verification using magnetic resonance imaging. Pure MAGIC.

In the third article, Margaret Spalding from Glasgow Caledonian University identifies and discusses the drivers for change in therapy radiography in the continuing education and professional development arena. Margaret discusses some of

the barriers and limitations to educational and CPD activities and argues that the impending requirements of the Health Professions Council will be a significant influence on the uptake of CPD for therapy radiographers.

Alison Smith from the Christie Hospital, Manchester, presents her research which focussed upon a national audit of radiotherapy prescription conformance and traceability. The findings indicate that the majority of radiotherapy centres within the UK have a protocol for the management of radiotherapy prescription compliance, where causes in non-compliance are documented. However a significant number of centres fail to monitor or evaluate causes of radiotherapy prolongation. Alison makes a number of recommendations and suggests that a national audit system should be put in place.

In response to the government targets for treatment waiting time, Bridge and Jenkinson present their findings of the financial and organisational interventions on the radiotherapy waiting list at the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary. They conclude that radiotherapy waiting times can be met, albeit with financial and organisational interventions and that a streamlined and computerised waiting list management system is invaluable.

To complete this issue, Denise Hodgson from Sheffield Hallam University undertakes a book review on 'Supportive Care in Radiotherapy' edited by Sara Faithfull and Mary Wells, Churchill Livingstone, 2003.

If you have any comments or suggestions to make on the Journal, we would very much like to hear from you and we will be very pleased to hear from any individuals who wish to be supported through the process of presenting a paper for publication.

Angela Duxbury and David Eddy
Editors-in-Chief