

First Year Experience with an International Medical Physics Peer Support Group

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INTRODUCTION

While many (Low-to-Middle-Income-Country) LMIC focused radiotherapy educational efforts are directed at oncologists, few opportunities exist specifically for medical physicists. To fill this gap, a Kenyan Physicists Forum (KPF) was created. The forum is open to physicists at any Kenyan radiation therapy centre with the goal of monthly online meetings to discuss medical physics topics of interest to the participants.

AIM

To provide a forum for medical physicists in Kenya to discuss medical physics topics relevant to their practice

METHOD

Invitations sent to previously established contacts requesting

- participation in an informational survey
- approval from an immediate supervisor

Informational survey

- applicants' backgrounds
- work environment
- aspirations for the forum

Online Meetings

- Discussion topics were chosen by the Kenyan physicists
- Format either seminar or discussion

After one year

- 'Help us improve' survey was sent to all participants
- Included questions with both rating scale and free text responses

RESULTS

In the first year of the KPF

- 11 meetings were held
- Each meeting was attended by 4-12 people
- The forum grew from 12 to 22 members by word of mouth

End of Year 'Help us Improve' survey

- Completed by eight physicists
- Average score for rating scale questions was 10.4/14
- Session scheduling and logistics
 - Only "Time Allotted to Q&A" was rated as "2-Needs Improvement"
 - All others rated as "3-Acceptable" or "4-Excellent"
 - See Table 1
- Usefulness of information shared during the sessions
 - None rated as "1 Not Useful"
 - Most rated "2 Will affect future process" or "3 Improved existing process"
 - See Table 2
- Process changes as a result of the forum
 - Five participants reported changes to processes
 - One reported improved understanding
 - One requested topics for future meetings
 - See Table 3

Table 1: Survey results for meeting scheduling and logistics items

	1 - Bad	2 - Needs improvement	3 - Acceptable	4 - Excellent
Scheduling of session	0	0	4	4
Communication during session	0	0	3	5
Time allotted to Q&A	0	2	2	4
Utility of answers to questions	0	0	3	5

Table 2. Survey results for "How Useful was the information shared during the sessions?"

	0 - Did not attend	1 - Not Useful	2 - Will Affect Future Process	3 - Improved Existing Process	4 - Newly Implemented in Clinic
CTSim QA (4) (Dec - Mar)	3	0	1	2	2
Linac commissioning (2) (Apr-May)	2	0	4	1	1
HDR QA (June)	2	0	2	4	0
IMRT planning (July)	1	0	3	3	1
IMRTQA (Sept)	0	0	3	5	0
Beam modelling (Oct)	3	0	2	2	1

Table 3. Responses to Survey Item:

"Please provide a brief description of changes to processes as a result of participation in the forum"

Improved my understanding, as such no changes implemented so far
We started doing some CT QA at XXX cancer center
Member mobilization
I would wish we focus more on IMRT,VMAT and Beam modelling since many centres now are planning to role out the technique
Even though we had commenced attempts at CT QA, we did not realize that we didn't have some phantoms requisite for performance of some of the tests until during the sessions. We've since sought alternatives about the CT QA.
We have introduced slice thickness as part of QA in our CT simulator We are doing absolute dose measurement for the CT sim I also learnt tips for planning a good IMRT plan and since then am so happy with my plans
I have been enlightened in all the topics discussed. This has greatly affected my planning especially IMRT and IMRT QA. HDR QA also improved what we have always been doing as a center

CONCLUSIONS

The Kenyan Physicists Forum is a useful model for interacting with and assisting LMIC physicists. In future sessions, we hope to build on research interests.

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