



EDITORIAL

Specialist geriatric services: A necessity within the radiotherapy workforce

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A large proportion of cancer patients receiving outpatient chemotherapy and radiotherapy services are more than 70 years old. For this subgroup of patients, a general clinical evaluation may not be sufficient to determine an individual's treatment strategy as there are other non-standard medical issues that concern the elderly such as polypharmacy, the need for extra social care, and accessibility to information^[1]. In addition, these patients also have increased risks of reduced mobility, as well as emotional and financial difficulties.

Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate geriatric assessment (GA) into routine medical practice in order to improve individualized care^[2,3]. Geriatric assessment is a comprehensive process that evaluates a senior patient's medical, emotional, social and functional capacity^[4]. In the current issue of *AMOR*, Louise Hogan and Anita O'Donovan from Trinity College Dublin evaluated the experience of elderly patients who used radiotherapy services in Ireland^[5]. This was conducted through a number of questions directed at a focus group of elderly cancer patients, assessing different spheres of social difficulties associated with undergoing radiotherapy in this age group.

They found that it is important to focus on providing essential information to patients in a calm setting at an appropriate time. They also recommended establishing proper support groups for elderly patients receiving radiotherapy, as well as encouraging one-to-one discus-

sions between patients and members of the healthcare team regarding possible side effects of treatment.

In conclusion, it is evident that specialist geriatric services within radiotherapy departments are a necessity, given the large number of elderly patients receiving radiotherapy and the specificity of their medical and social needs. It is also believed that a treatment strategy based on a personalized GA for elderly patients will improve the overall treatment efficacy and minimize unwanted complications^[6].

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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