

# SHARING EXPERIENCE OF OUR INNOVATIVE STEP OF RUNNING ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES VIA INTERNET BLOG FOR RADIATION ONCOLOGY POST-GRADUATE DOCTORS

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PJR April - June 2021; 31(2): 129-130

Radiation Oncology is a highly quality conscious specialty of medicine. Like other disciplines, post-graduate residency programs of radiation oncology need continuous improvement in order to fulfill present training needs. Various strategies have evolved to incorporate all the learning objectives and tasks which are required for encouraging post-graduate trainees and practicing specialists to become patient-centered and competent Radiation Oncologists.<sup>1</sup>

We shared our own Pakistani experience of post-graduate training issues in a manuscript published in Clinical Oncology, Royal College of Radiologists official journal's September 2017 issue.<sup>2</sup> One of the important aspects of post-graduate training is guiding and mentoring residents to do a critical appraisal of published literature. We are aware of the fact that there is plenty of data being published in the field of oncology, therefore it is important for learners, to identify the landmark, practice-changing scientific articles and recognize evidence-based standard treatment to incorporate ethical practice with identification of limitations in their own practice system.<sup>2</sup>

For improving the critical appraisal skills of our trainees, we introduced an innovative strategy in our training program. An independent professional forum was developed on the internet for academic growth and development of trainees in which references of relevant landmark published articles, practice guidelines and articles highlighting innovative approaches were added. The objectives were to enhance knowledge of postgraduate trainees for modern and evidence-based clinical practice to provide benefit to our patients. Developing a central repository of con-

temporary literature published in the field of oncology relevant to each tumour subsite and to increase multidisciplinary culture in our country, were the secondary objectives.

Using Google blogger facility, a blog was created with the name of "Oncology Learner's Forum" on the internet.<sup>3</sup> Landmark articles published in the field of oncology-related to each specific tumour site were discussed with senior faculty. List of all tumour subsites including Pub med cited link for each article was then added on the site-specific page. List of indexed peer-reviewed journals was also added to facilitate trainees. Material related to the academic and learning purpose, for instance, peer-reviewed practice, managerial skills and exam preparation were also added on the blog. Blog's address on the internet was communicated to all colleagues through social media, various scientific sessions and most importantly through personal contacts.

Our Pakistani learners group had agreed and commented on Sandra Turner and co-authors views regarding the main primary objective of training the future proficient radiation oncologists.<sup>3</sup> In a short duration, our blog has been browsed more than 20,000 times within a year. Total hits at the moment cross 32,000 figure. We received positive feedback and participation not only from residents of our training program but from the trainees of other hospitals across the country as well. This has been analyzed by the built-in software of blogger which can identify the number of people accessing the website from different regions. In this way, trainees are getting assistance and taking advantage of this forum to

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Submitted 24 June 2021, Accepted 25 June 2021

enhance their knowledge and skills regardless of their training institute and region of the country.

Social media is definitely playing its own role in the contemporary educational culture. A recently published study from eight different Radiation Oncology facilities of United States clearly documented the positive impact of social media usage by Radiation Oncology post graduate residents.<sup>4</sup> Our blog is also an innovative component of our self study structured postgraduate learning plan. The blog is originated in Pakistan but it is being used by postgraduate resident trainees from across the world. As a learning resource this blog is also used by radiation oncologists and specialists of other allied cancer specialties even after passing their exit examinations.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, we consider this blog as a learning resource for life long learners of Cancer Care.

In conclusion, both faculty development planning and post-graduate training are of critical importance and constant efforts are needed to develop innovative strategies and incorporate them effectively into our healthcare systems. It is a firm opinion of our team that the utilization of internet facilities like a dedicated blog can be considered as a learning platform which is a potential way to assist trainees in enhancing scientific evidence-based knowledge.

The Blog has above 32,000 hits and has the following chapters with individualized links. The list is in alphabetical order.

- 1) CME
- 2) Ethical Practice Assignment
- 3) Examination Tips
- 4) International Lectures
- 5) International Networking
- 6) List of Tumor Sites
- 7) MDT Tumor Boards
- 8) Pakistani RT Information
- 9) Publications
- 10) Refresher Session Schedule
- 11) Research
- 12) Study Plan

Continuous feedback and review can make this innovative step more productive for all postgraduate trainees and practicing specialists. Blog address is [olfpk.blogspot.com](http://olfpk.blogspot.com).<sup>6</sup>

**Keywords:** Radiation Oncology, Post-graduate training, Education, Faculty development, learning methodology, internet blogs.

**Conflict of Interest:** None

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