CORRESPONDENCE

Radiosurgery for Spinal Malignant Tumors

by PD Dr. med. habil. Berndt Wowra, PD Dr. med. habil. Stefan Zausinger,
PD Dr. med. Alexander Muacevic, Prof. Dr. med. Jörg-Christian Tonn
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Expertise Is Crucial

On the basis of the non-judgmental review article by Sahgal et al (1), Wowra et al report a therapeutic approach that is pointing the way, as well as their own experiences with a truly fascinating technology, which can undoubtedly be performed with equal precision, safety, dosage distributions, and control rates in state-of-the-art radiotherapeutic institutions with a linear accelerator by using complementary functionalities (www.elekta.com/oncology/IGRT, www.varian.com/us/oncology/radiosurgery). Comprehensive service provision is thus guaranteed, to the benefit of all those affected. However, the technology will remain a tool; the crucial factor will always be expertise.

Spinal radiosurgery is also an excellent example for the evolutionary development of radiotherapy in the past 10 years. It combines all modern forms of application, calculation algorithms, and dosage concepts; however, simultaneously, many questions arise that require answers (quality assurance, normal tissue tolerance doses, etc). The topic of extracranial radiosurgery remains an exciting subcategory within interdisciplinary radio-oncology.

For our patients, the following is important: over the next few years, oncologists of all specialties will not be able to escape or avoid many radiotherapeutic terms and phrases (and their basic principles), such as SBRS ("stereotactic body radiosurgery"), hypofractionated IGRT ("image guided radiotherapy"), IMRT ("intensity modulated radiotherapy"), and IMAT ("intensity modulated arc therapy", dynamic IMRT).

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In Reply:

We thank Fehlauer for his kind appreciation of our article. We agree entirely that it is expertise—the quality of a specific medical service—which has a very important influence on the treatment result, especially if one

assumes or aspires to comprehensive availability of spinal radiosurgery
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Conflict of interest statement

The authors of both the letter and of the reply declare that no conflict of interest exists according to the guidelines of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors.