

PAAROT: Aggregate Data From the First Year

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Objective: In 2006, ASTRO developed a web-based Performance Quality Improvement (PQI) activity: Performance Assessment for the Advancement of Radiation Oncology Treatment (PAAROT). This program has been certified by the American Board of Radiology; free access was provided to ASTRO members in 2008.

Methods: Physicians completed an assessment survey evaluating patient charts for outcome measures. Areas of improvement are selected and data re-assessed 3-18 months later using another cadre of patients.

Results: As of March 1, 2009, 353 physicians have registered. Of the 168 that have started and of those eligible, 79% have completed PAAROT PQI studies. The most frequently selected metrics monitored: 1) Was the patient screened for pain and counseled on options of pain management techniques, 2) Was the patient enrolled in a protocol and 3) Was the patient screened for cancer related fatigue. Although success is not required for PQI credit, 92% of the selected interventions were successfully completed. Aggregated frequency of major metrics across the participating physician practices reveals that history/physicals are present in the chart in 99% of cases, and AJCC stage in 85%. DVHs were signed 82% of the time. Films/EPIs were reviewed in 95% of cases, weekly treatment checks performed in 95%, and peer review conducted in 89%. Most patients treated palliatively received 6-15 fractions. Intensity modulation was used for 0% - of palliative cases and 23% of curative cases.

Conclusions: PAAROT has proven a viable mechanism for web-based PQI. Aggregate data provide a perspective on current radiation oncology practice nationwide, and reveal that a focus on an area of improvement yields measurable improvement in that area.