COVID-19 & Cancer Care

Media Briefing
March 30, 2021

Featuring experts from:

ASTRO
NCCS

Today’s Speakers

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Board of Directors

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CEO, National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
COVID-19 & Radiation Oncology: Results of a National Physician Survey

Dr. Thomas J. Eichler
Chair, American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) Board of Directors

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Radiation Oncology & COVID-19

1.9 million new cancer cases estimated in 2021

More than half will be treated with radiation therapy

Physician surveys to gauge COVID-19 impact and response:
- April 2020
- May 2020
- June 2020
- January 2021
Survey: Radiation Oncology & COVID-19

Physician surveys to gauge COVID-19 impact and response:

- April 2020
- May 2020
- June 2020

**117 physician leaders at U.S. radiation therapy clinics**

Online survey collected Jan. 15 to Feb. 7, 2021

Respondents:
- 55% in private practice, 44% academic
- 52% practice in a major metro area (pop. >1 million)
- 37 states represented

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Doctors report that **people with cancer are facing additional burden** due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **66% said** new patients are presenting with **more advanced cancers**
- **73% said** patients **missed cancer screenings** because of the pandemic
- **66% said** patients **experienced treatment interruptions**
Enhanced safety protocols remain widespread at radiation therapy clinics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Social distancing in the clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99%</td>
<td>Staff routinely wear masks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98%</td>
<td>Patients routinely wear masks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97%</td>
<td>Staff who show symptoms are tested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94%</td>
<td>Patients are screened at the door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93%</td>
<td>Increased clinic sterilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Staff wear face shields for treatments</td>
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<tr>
<td>73%</td>
<td>Visitors are not allowed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Treatment postponements and deferrals have almost entirely subsided.

- **Deferring any new patients**
  - April 2020: 75%
  - January 2021: 12%

- **Postponing any treatments**
  - April 2020: 92%
  - January 2021: 15%
Treatment postponements and deferrals have almost entirely subsided.

Clinics that Postponed Some Treatments Due to the Pandemic

April 2020: 92%  
May 2020: 81%  
June 2020: 45%  
January 2021: 15%

Telemedicine remains popular in radiation therapy clinics.

85% offer telemedicine for routine follow-up visits

54% for new patient consultations

15% for patients currently in treatment
Clinics still report difficulty accessing PPE and other critical supplies.

42% of radiation oncology clinics still experienced shortages of PPE, medical hand sanitizer and other critical resources in early 2021.

Clinics continue to face operational challenges caused by the pandemic.

72% of radiation therapy clinics reduced staff at some point because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Most doctors said **access to the COVID-19 vaccine** was a barrier to vaccination efforts at their clinics.

Access to the vaccine has been a barrier to COVID-19 vaccination in my practice.

![Bar chart showing](chart1)

Most doctors also said **COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy** among staff and patients was a barrier.

Vaccine hesitancy has been a barrier to COVID-19 vaccination of staff in my practice.

![Bar chart showing](chart2)
Moving Forward

• Efforts to encourage communities to resume cancer screening, detection and treatment

• Modern treatments may offset some threat from advanced-stage cancers.

• Support for COVID-19 vaccination for cancer patients, survivors, caregivers and providers

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