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Audit of the radiotherapy waiting times for patients in Malta

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Introduction

The Radiotherapy Patient Pathway (RPP) outlining the major stages involved from date of patient consultation to treatment was established for Sir Anthony Mamo Oncology Centre (SAMOC) for all patients receiving radiotherapy. Figure 1 below is an illustration of the main stages, as a subset of the RPP, which were included in this audit. An audit of the established RPP was performed to determine the waiting times at specific stages and the overall waiting time. Waiting times were also sub-divided per treatment site.

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Method

A sample of 290 patients, based on a 95% confidence interval and 5% margin of error, was randomly generated as a representation of the patient population of 1 year. Records were selected both retrospectively and prospectively over a 7 month period. A proportional sampling method was used to subdivide patients into 6 treatment sites: Palliative; Breast; Prostate; Pelvis; Abdomen/Thorax; Head&Neck. Each patient journey was mapped on the RPP and the date of arrival at each stage was recorded. Statistical analysis was performed to determine the weighted mean, median and mode waiting times for all records analysed.

Results

Results indicate an overall total weighted mean waiting time of 36 days with a maximum of 62 days for Prostate and a minimum of 19 days for Palliative. Analysis of the waiting time between specific stages of the RPP showed a total weighted mean of 8 days from Consultation to date of CT scan; 13 days from date of CT scan to arrival at the Medical Physics department; 15 days in the Medical Physics department, and 8 days from the Pre-Treatment stage to the Treatment Date.

Conclusions

Methods of decreasing patient waiting times across the RPP should be explored in order to provide a more timely radiotherapy service at SAMOC. Recommendations for a more efficient workflow include the further development of an existing oncology information system Mosaiq™, and developing and re-engineering the organisation structure within the context of a multidisciplinary team.

Country

Malta

Institution

Sir Anthony Mamo Oncology Centre (SAMOC)

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