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Radiotherapy in Hue: journey and effort

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With a population over 90 millions, the cancer incidence rate in Viet Nam is having more than 150,000 new cases diagnosed every year. National strategy has been implementing, including the development of breast and cervical cancer screening projects, in order to control the cancer growing trend. Initiatives on improving the mortality rate of cancer patients, like enhancing hospital's infrastructure on cancer treatment facility, allocating extra resources in training programs for medical professionals, are also in progress.

Hue Central Hospital, a public regional hospital belonged to Ministry of Health located in central Vietnam providing oncology clinical services including radiotherapy to cancer patients.

Oncology Center, formerly known as oncology department, was established in 1995, with just 30 beds. In the beginning, we had a Cobalt-60 radiation therapy machine which treating for about 30 cancer patients per day with 2D techniques. Over the time, the number of patients has been increasing, at peak time this machine (over 2 times of source replacement) covered the treatment for approximately 70 to 90 patients/day. Realizing the treatment overloading, and that the Cobalt-60 machine was becoming obsolete, which specially did not ensure the quality of treatment, we decided to invest a new machine. However, one problem that we had to face to was that the investment capital was limited. Although Hue Central Hospital is a public one, but then, in 2010, the government was not enough money to invest for the upgrading. Our leaders decided to invest by the socializing model (a private company was responsible for machine installing and maintenance, hospital team was responsible for operation, 40- 60 ratio investment income sharing). So we had got the Elekta Pricise machine for treatment.

Also in that year, the project of upgrading equipments for the oncology center was launched, with ODA (Official Development Assistance). Looking back 20 years of developing cancer radiotherapy in Hue, we found a great effort of overcoming a lot of difficulties.

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