

Providing culturally responsive cancer care for First Nations peoples in Australia

Nicholas Davis¹

¹University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia

Introduction: Advancements in evidence-based cancer care has resulted in Australia maintaining some of the highest cancer survival rates in the world. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples however, experience significant disparities in cancer outcomes compared with non-indigenous counterparts.¹ First Nations peoples recognise health to be a complex balance of physical, social, spiritual and environmental wellbeing.² This intrinsic link between health, connection to land, identity, culture and community is not well reflected within the Australian healthcare system.¹

Learning objectives:

- Outline barriers preventing equitable access of health care for First Nations peoples in Australia
- Identify practices that ensure the provision of culturally responsive care for First Nations peoples in Australia
- Highlight educational training modules available to medical radiation professionals to develop cultural competency.

Discussion: Factors preventing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from receiving equitable access to cancer treatment services include low health literacy, remote living locations, distrust of health services and language barriers.³ Health providers should endeavour to better understand the needs and concerns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communicate in a culturally respectful manner, and provide a more holistic approach to treatment to improve outcomes of health care.²

Conclusion: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience poorer access to, and outcomes of care as their concept of health transcends beyond physical wellbeing. Cultural incompetence in health care correlates with compromise in quality of health outcomes.² The education of medical radiation professionals to deliver culturally responsive care is imperative to providing equitable care in Australia.

References

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Is radiomics a promising direction for the future of radiation oncology?

Ellen McEvey,¹ Riya Gupta,¹ Tatiana Griffiths¹

¹RMIT University, Bundoora, Australia

Given the rapid rate of change in radiation oncology, it is important for practitioners, specifically radiation therapists, to understand future directions of practice to ensure that they can adopt the latest developments in their own routine clinical practice.

This presentation aims to holistically evaluate radiomics, a future direction of radiation oncology practice, identifying the implications, benefits and limitations to both patients, the radiation oncology workforce and the community at large, that the implementation of this technology would have on the industry.

Medical images serve an integral role in the clinical management of radiation oncology patients. Despite this crucial role, the analysis of an image is based on a visual interpretation that is subject to intra- and inter-physician variability. An advanced medical image processing paradigm, radiomics is an evolving medical field attempting to overcome this limitation to current practice.

Through extracting quantitative image features, radiomics facilitates the identification of an infinite supply of imaging biomarkers that can be used for cancer detection, diagnosis, prognosis and predicting response to treatment, ultimately improving the accuracy with which radiotherapy treatment is prescribed and delivered.

The implications of this technology on practice are significant, with the potential to prescribe personalised treatment to identified areas of high-risk disease, predict the onset of toxicities, in addition to treatment outcomes, radiomics offers a clear benefit to patients.

However, there are also challenges to this technology, notably the limited prospective, multi-centric research within this field, and the additional technical considerations associated with implementing a novel technique into an established clinical workflow.