

Radiation Oncology Training at the University of Toronto

Andrea Bezjak, Program Director
UTDRO Residency training program

Nov 2022

Outline of the Presentation

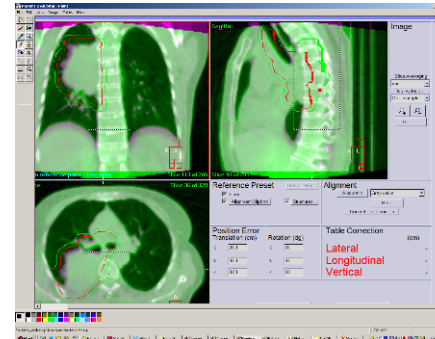
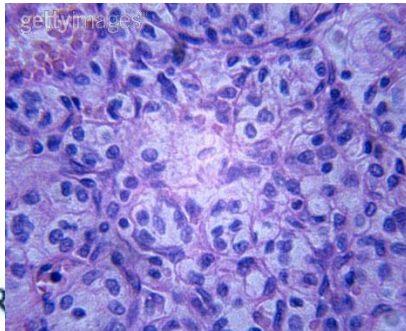
1. What is Radiation Oncology/What do Radiation Oncologists do
2. RO Residency Training at University of Toronto
3. What is the Application Process like
4. What after Residency is Completed

What is Radiation Oncology

A clinical specialty based on knowledge of cancer, anatomy, biology, imaging and technology

Team-based specialty – collaboration and communication very important

Indications for radiation continue to expand
curative, ablative, palliative
external and procedure-based



What do Radiation Oncologists (RO) Do?

Clinical care – mostly outpatient

consultations with newly diagnosed patients

decisions about best treatment

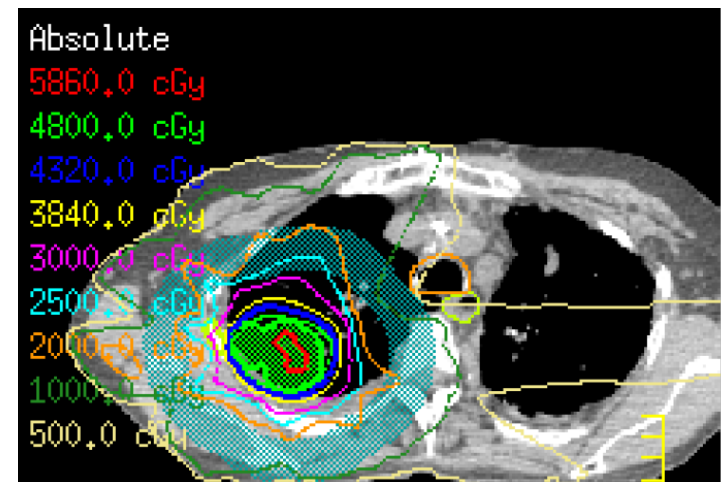
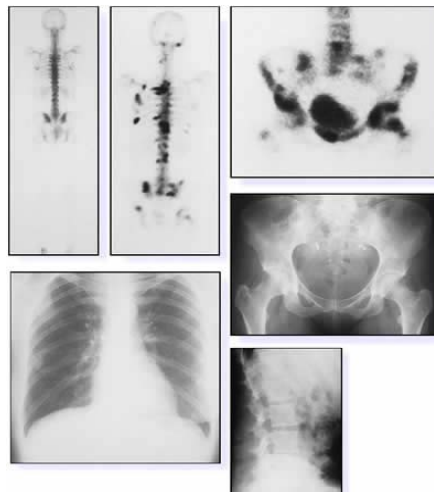
outlining the target for radiation (“contouring”)

reviewing the RT treatment plan

overseeing the course of RT

managing side-effects

following the patient after treatment



What do Radiation Oncologists Do?

- Most RO focus their work on several cancer types (eg breast, lung, GU cancers...) altho they need to know about all
- Some RO do procedures (eg brachytherapy for gyne ca, prostate)
- They work in Cancer centers across Canada
- Team work – physicists, therapists, nurses, medical oncologists, surgeons, etc



What do Radiation Oncologists Do?

Research/Scholarly Pursuits:

clinical

translational (lab to bedside and back

technology research

health services research

education research

other

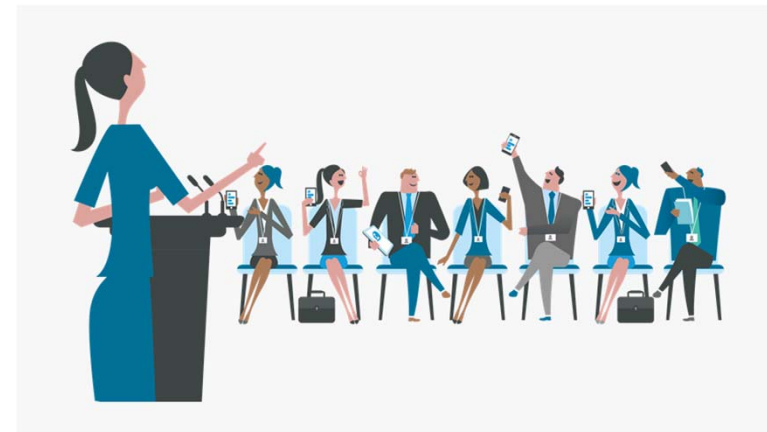


Teaching:

patients/families/public

trainees

other health care providers



Radiation Oncology Residency Program

- Five year program
- 13 Residency programs across the country
- <https://www.royalcollege.ca/rcsite/documents/arps/rad-oncology-e>
- Competence by Design introduced in July 2019 across Canada (except Queens started in 2017)
 - Transition to Discipline (1-2 months)
 - Foundations of Discipline (10-15 months)
 - Core of Discipline (30-36 months)
 - Transition to Practice (10-12 months)

Transition to Discipline at UT DRO

- 2 blocks (July, Aug of PGY1 year)
- Orientation, lectures, clinics, inpatient units
- On call (with a “buddy” resident) at Princess Margaret Cancer Center (PMH) or Sunnybrook (Odette Cancer Center)
- Focus on Performing and documenting a history and physical exam and Completing a patient handover

Foundations of Discipline at UTDRO (PGY1)

10 clinical blocks (off service) + 1 academic block

2 Internal Medicine

1 Urgent care Clinic (Oncology)

1 Surgical Oncology

1 ENT

2 Palliative care

2 Medical Oncology

1 Internal Medicine

1 Foundations Academic

Core of Discipline at UTDRO – 36 mo (PGY2 -4)

- Clinical Rotations (both at PMH and OCC)
- On Call at the center where rotating
 - PMH = in house, OCC = from home
 - Call well below PARO guidelines
 - No clinical duties next day if in house call or called in after midnight
- Academic Half Day every Friday AM for all residents
 - No clinical duties during AHD
 - Lectures and “treatment planning drill”
 - Applied physics teaching
- Exams – OSCE, written clinical exams (PGY2, 3), Physics exams, Planning Exams (PGY3, 4)

Core at UTDRO (PGY2-3)

2-3 months for core clinical sites

either at PMH or at OCC – with 2-3 attending RO

Breast Cancer

GU Cancers

Skin Cancer/Brain Metastases

Palliative Radiation

Lung Cancer

GI Cancers

Gyne Cancers

Head and Neck Cancers

Core at UTDRO (PGY4)

1-2 months for other clinical sites
at PMH, OCC and community rotations

CNS

Lymphoma

Endocrine

Sarcoma

Pediatric Cancers

Community RO rotation

Elective Rotation

One-on-one RO Rotation

Transition to Practice at UTDRO –PGY5 yr

- Clinical Rotations as per resident choice
- Longitudinal Clinic
- Academic pursuits
- Electives

Application Process to RO Residency

- 13 programs across Canada – 21 Residency positions
- July 2023 UTDR0 = 4 CMG (we sometimes have visa-trainees as well, but not expecting them for 2023)
- **Goals of UTDR0 Residency Program =**
- Train Future Academic Leaders
- Attract Dynamic Enquiring Individuals who are enthusiastic about RO
- Attract Residents who will contribute to advancing our profession and pursue scholarly enquiry
- Expectation of excellence in all CanMEDS roles

Requirements at UTDRO

- A strong academic record
- A proven interest in our specialty, demonstrated by experience in our specialty or related fields
- References should attest to proficiency in clinical skills and provide comments on maturity, interpersonal skills, ability to work independently and potential for an academic career
- Evidence of Research or Scholarly activity

Comments re expectations at UTDRO

- A strong academic record - we are not comparing between applicants but looking at what you did and how well (eg someone with a BSc background would not be compared to a MSc or PhD applicant)
- A proven interest in our specialty, demonstrated by experience in our specialty or related fields –no expectations of electives in Toronto
- References should attest to proficiency in clinical skills etc-references should be from faculty who got to know you the best – they don't have to be RO faculty, more important that they describe your qualities and provide specifics/details
- Evidence of Research or Scholarly activity –no expectation that it is in oncology area

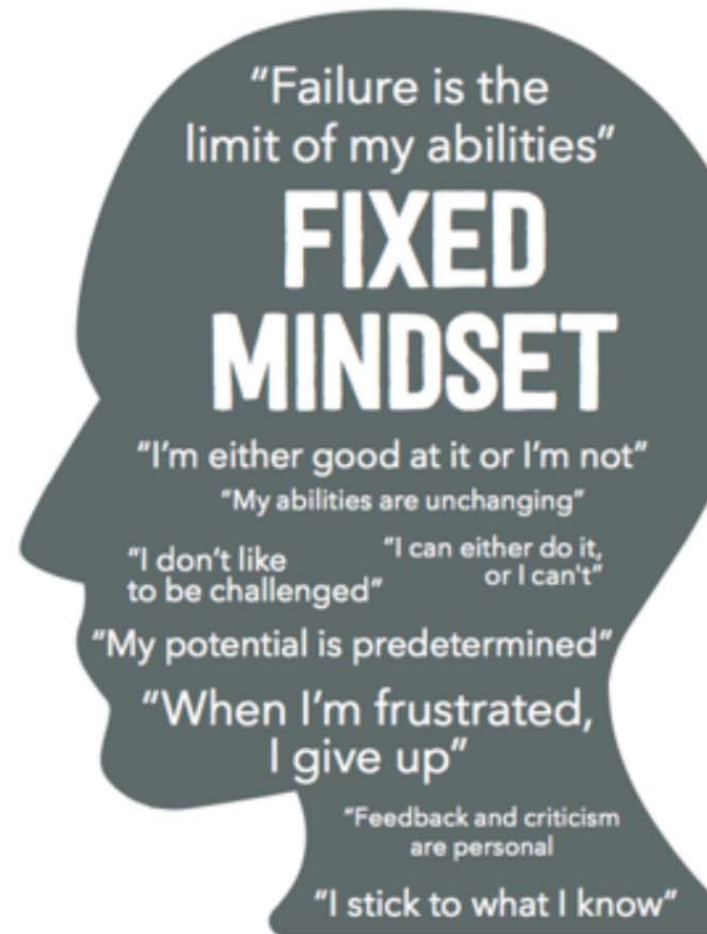


Residency at UTDRO

- Great peer group (by far the largest RO program in Canada – currently 22)
- World-class faculty and teams
- Emphasis on clinical excellence and academic pursuits
- Lots of resources - patients, technology, staff
- Lots of research opportunities
- Formal mentorship program
- Wellness program
- Two large cancer programs help residents learn to understand evidence underpinning different treatment approaches
- Diversity, equity, inclusivity are lived, not just acknowledged



Nurturing a Growth Mindset



What after Residency Program is completed?

- Fellowships – most residents currently pursue them to gain additional clinical experience/exposure – Canada, US etc
- Staff positions - most find jobs within 1-2 yrs of residency completion – but may not be in GTA or Ontario
- CARO Human Resources data – 84% of Canadian graduates found staff positions within 1 yr of residency completion in 2020
- 67% of Ontario graduating residents stayed in Ontario
- CARO HR Workforce projections used to predict demand and train appropriate number of residents across Canada (currently 21, may need to increase in the future)

49 cancer centers in Canada with RT departments



Ontario cancer centers with RT:

PMH, OCC, Barrie, Credit Valley, Newmarket, Oshawa, Kitchener, London, Hamilton, St Catherine's, Kingston, Ottawa, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Windsor

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<https://www.radonc.utoronto.ca/radiation-oncology-residency>

