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Solutions for Oncology at CIRSE 2011

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As cancerous cells often spread beyond their site of origin, a whole-body approach to treatment is vital, and multidisciplinary collaboration is the only way to provide the best care. IR began its work in oncology decades ago and since then the scope of involvement has gone from treating the complications of cancer to treating the tumours themselves.

Learn More About IR & Oncology

The broad and multi-faceted nature of cancer care is a central theme at CIRSE 2011 with numerous sessions covering the current status, role and value of various IR interventions in oncology. Special sessions relevant to daily practice will inform about the latest developments from the world of interventional radiology and hands-on workshops will provide live demonstration of techniques, reinforced by guided practice. Further opportunities for building knowledge and experience are offered during interactive case sessions, in which the audience will take part in discussions on the challenging cases presented. As well as enhancing diagnostics with image-guided minimally invasive biopsy techniques, IR is strengthening the armamentarium of therapies for cancer. IR treatments have many benefits arising from a localised approach, which can avoid the systemic side-effects common to classic cancer treatments.

Interventional oncology is typified by the various forms of embolisation and ablation, some of which will be highlighted during "Oncologic IR under the microscope", a special session where the value of these techniques will be discussed in the context of the observable cellular changes and clinical outcomes. A newer ablation technique that offers the exciting prospect of non-invasive intervention is high intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU). The promising development of HIFU techniques applied to bone tumour and breast cancer treatment will form part of the special session on "High intensity focused ultrasound".

Interventional oncology plays an especially valuable role in the numerous cases where surgical removal of a tumour is not feasible or the patient is too weak to undergo surgery. Such scenarios can often occur due to kidney, lung, and liver cancers and their metastases. Special sessions on these diseases will discuss, among other things, the advantages and applications of radiofrequency ablation and cryoablation, as well as the virtues of IR compared to image-guided radiation therapy.

The Growing Role of IR

IR is set for expansion in the field of cancer management and renowned radiology researcher, Dr. Hedvig Hricak, Chair of the Radiology Department at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Centre, New York, U.S, is certain of the advantages of the specialty and its growing role in oncology: "The advances in minimally invasive medicine have been among the greatest successes in healthcare. They reduce complications, shorten or eliminate hospital stays and are increasingly being applied in surgical interventions. The demand for image guidance for biopsy and therapy is becoming more and more important. At this particular time, image-guided minimally invasive therapies are used predominantly for metastatic disease, but I am certain that treatment of primary tumours by interventional radiologists will increase in the near future."

The Future of Interventional Oncology

Interventional oncology's potential for new developments in the therapeutic arena is impressive. Continuing breakthroughs in reaching difficult-to-access tumours with microcatheters may provide future opportunities to treat cancers that, today, are often incurable; and developments in nanotechnology may open unique possibilities for the discipline. Some of the up-and-coming areas of IR in oncology, including new applications for HIFU and new nonthermal ablation techniques, will be presented in a "New frontiers in oncologic IR" special session.

Adam McLean IR has evolved into a specialty that is providing its own contributions to oncology and its indications are sure to widen. Nevertheless, the central importance of imaging to IR's unique approach is clear and the session on "Image guidance and assessment of tumour therapy" will detail the use of various imaging techniques in intervention guidance and tumour assessment. By combining existing methods and future medical innovations, IR is devising more sophisticated therapies for cancer care, offering patients not just the possibility of more effective treatment but also of reduced side-effects and a better quality of life.

