Addenbrooke's NHS Trust
Oncology Centre – Box 193

Competency Programme for Advanced Therapy Practitioners
Obtaining Informed Consent for Radiotherapy

Rationale

The aim of this protocol is to improve the quality of the patient journey through the oncology centre, alleviating pressure on the clinical oncologists, creating more time for the patient to discuss their treatment and its outcomes. The site specialist radiographer will undertake the competency programme when the appropriate MDT is satisfied that the individual has developed the required level of expert practice. The evidence for this will be demonstrated in a portfolio of clinical experience.

All patients will be informed that they are entitled to see a clinical oncologist if they would prefer.

Competency requirements

This standard is concerned with the informed consent procedure required for radiotherapy. This includes the explanation of the advantages and disadvantages of specific radiotherapy treatments and assisting patients in coming to an informed decision to accept a particular treatment.

Note: Consent to a specific treatment can only be obtained by a practitioner who has the appropriate knowledge of the proposed treatment for which consent is being sought.

Site specialist therapy radiographers may obtain informed consent for radiotherapy from patients after having successfully completed a recognised education programme (SHU – Postgraduate Informed Consent module) and the Oncology Centre competency assessment for obtaining informed consent.

Competency Assessment

Name_____ Date_____

Following completion of the education course the advanced practitioner will carry out 3 observed patient consent interviews.

These interviews will be observed by the Clinical Oncologist from the appropriate MDT.

1. Pre assessment discussion

Prior to the competency assessment the assessing Clinical Oncologist must ensure that the individual has the appropriate knowledge and understanding to support the standard (p 5) and the QA procedures are read and understood

2. Observed Practice

The individual must be competent in each of the performance criteria to be considered competent in obtaining a patient's informed consent to undergo radiotherapy.

Patient ID	Diagnosis	Radiotherapy Procedure	Competent Y / N

Oncology Centre – Box 193
Advanced Practitioner Competency

Name: **Date:**

Obtain informed consent for radiotherapy

The individual must be able to:

- explain the treatment, its advantages, disadvantages, benefits, risks and potential implications
- comprehensively answer any questions the patient may have
- assess how best to give this explanation to facilitate the patient's understanding
- help the patient reach an informed decision.

Performance Criteria	**Competent** **Yes**	**No**	**Action**
1. The identification details of the patient are checked according to local protocols before commencement of the informed consent process.			
2. Where appropriate, the pregnancy and breast feeding status of women of child bearing age are established according to local protocols.			
3. The patient's emotional and physical state is assessed to determine the best approach to optimise their understanding.			
4. The patient's ability to understand the language used by the individual is assessed and appropriate interpreters are arranged if required.			
5. The individual uses the patient's verbal and non-verbal indicators to determine the pace, content and language of the delivery to facilitate the patient's understanding.			
6. Where there is more than one choice of treatment or possible inclusion in a clinical trial, these choices are presented fairly, equitably and in a format that facilitates the patient's understanding.			
7. Where the patient seeks advice on the options, this is given impartially and, if there is a clinically preferred option, the reasons for this are explained.			

Performance Criteria	**Competent** **Yes**	**No**	**Action**
8. The patient is given verbal and written information on the advantages, disadvantages, risks and benefits of the specific treatment options in a manner which assists their understanding.			
9. The patient is given every opportunity to ask questions or seek clarification of any information they have been given.			
10. Feedback from the patient is sought to ascertain their level of understanding. Any gaps in the information are identified and appropriate information is given.			
11. The patient is given time to reflect on the information and, if requested, other members of the multi-disciplinary team, or the patient's carers and family, are requested to provide support.			
12. If the patient agrees to the treatment, the consent form is completed appropriately. The patient is given time to read the form and encouraged to question anything they do not understand before signing the document.			
13. The patient is reassured that they can change their mind at any stage throughout the episode of treatment and the implications of this are made clear in an unemotional manner.			
14. Where help/advice is required, this is recognised and sought from appropriate sources.			

Comments:

_____ _____

Supervisor signature: Advanced Practitioner signature:

Obtain informed consent for radiotherapy knowledge specification

Legislation, regulatory and protocols
1. Current radiation protection regulations.
2. Local protocols for data entry, utilisation, recording and transfer.
3. Local protocols on informed consent.
4. National guidelines for and legal implications of informed consent.
5. Local protocols for patient identification.
6. National and local guidelines for radiotherapy planning and treatment.
7. Limitations of own knowledge and experience and the importance of not operating beyond this.
Clinical knowledge
8. Relevant anatomy e.g. sectional and functional.
9. Signs of patient anxiety.
10. Signs and symptoms of the short and long term side effects of radiotherapy.
11. Range of medications available for the short and long term side effects of radiotherapy and any contra-indications.
12. Strategies for effectively communicating bad news.
13. Range of informed consent forms.
14. Concurrent and malignant disease progression and the potential impact on physiological systems.
Technical knowledge
15. Principles of radiobiology, for example: • effects of radiation on the cell cycle; • dose and fractionation regimes; • TCP/NTCP
16. Principles of radiotherapy physics, for example: • interaction processes with matter; • production and utilisation of images.
17. Contra–indications to treatment.
18. Advantages, disadvantages, risks and benefits of radiotherapy.
Examination procedures and patient management
19. Principles of radiotherapy, for example: • patient positioning and immobilisation in order to optimise reproducibility of treatment delivery; • selection of appropriate treatment technique for optimum delivery.
20. Special arrangements for patient's unable to consent for themselves
21. Roles and responsibilities of other team members.

Evaluation **(comments if applicable)**

_____has completed the Informed Consent training and is considered competent to practice and is aware of his/her personal accountability and Addenbrooke's NHS Trust liability.

Signed _____Date _____
Clinical oncologist

I have completed the course and consider myself competent to obtain informed consent for radiotherapy. I am aware of my personal accountability and Addenbrooke's NHS Trust liability.

Signed _____Date _____
Advanced practitioner

Signed _____Date _____
Head of Radiotherapy

Signed_____Date_____
Clinical Director

Signed_____Date_____
ADO Oncology