

Purpose:

Although well known for its work in dosimetry, the IAEA requires experts in medical radiation physics to assist with projects in developing countries such as commissioning radiotherapy machines and treatment planning systems. Consultants are used also to draft documents and provide advice on divergent topics such as quality assurance for IMRT and PET-CT, and a methodology for comprehensive auditing in radiotherapy.

Method and Materials:

Through its publications, the IAEA's attention in developing countries is focused on redressing the dual gaps in access to basic technology using radiation medicine and in advanced technology that attempts to increase the fraction of patients treated with curative intent.

Results:

DMRP has produced information of relevance to the practice of medical physics in any centre of limited resources irrespective of geographic location. In educating medical physicists, the handbook for teachers and students in Radiation Oncology Physics has been supplemented by a β -version of a set of 2,500 slides to assist in self-directed studies, recently posted on the DMRP web site for comments and feedback. A syllabus for medical physics in diagnostic radiology has been prepared and co-authors are being recruited to write individual chapters. TRS-430 on QA for treatment planning systems has been supplemented by two additional documents on type tests to be done by the supplier, and acceptance and commissioning tests to be done on-site. A methodology for comprehensive auditing of radiotherapy centres and a more specific document on physics auditing in radiotherapy have been prepared. A new document describing a basic radiotherapy facility including its human resources component has completed technical editing.

Conclusion:

New projects and up-coming opportunities, and the process to become an IAEA consultant will be described in the hope that AAPM members will be encouraged to offer their services to strengthen the practice of medical physics internationally.