

AbstractID: 11568 Title: About the experience with the implementation of a paperless patient chart system in private and hospital based radiation medicine departments

#### Introduction:

Many hospitals have made it one of their main goals to become paperless within the next couple of years. However, we are facing unique challenges in radiation medicine. Typical EMR systems are not suited as verify&record systems. In addition, most EMR systems are built with nurses and physicians in mind. However, in radiation medicine other healthcare professionals like radiation therapists, dosimetrists and physicists are also key players. As a result, a change management team at the department level needs to implement the paperless process in radiation medicine departments. I want to share the experience we gained during the process of doing so.

#### Methods&Materials:

Implementation of a paperless system requires good technical understanding and training. In addition, it requires a good understanding of workflow. The latter is also critical for the implementation of a quality management program. The paperless process was implemented in several phases. Initially, the change management team was small and consisted only of the chief therapist and physicist. Others were consulted and a dry run was started in treatment planning and with only a few patients. Workflow was closely monitored and then fine-tuned. Training needs were identified and eventually the change management team involved all key players and the paperless process was fully implemented. Workflow for the entire department was mapped out in flowcharts.

#### Results:

Change needs to be implemented in phases, but going back to the “old” system must not be an option. Phasing in new processes will temporarily create certain disconnects and the change management team needs to address resulting problems immediately. Most departments will typically end-up being “paperlight” initially. However, the advantages of transparent workflow and QA procedures result in self-motivation, until the point is reached where the change management team can retire and the department owns the new processes.