Quality Assurance of Ultrasound-Guided Radiotherapy: TG 154

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Available technology

- BAT (B-mode acquisition and targeting system)
  - Articulating arm technology (original)
  - Optical marker tracking
- Sonarray (Varian Medical Systems)
  - Optical marker tracking
- Clarity (Resonant Medical)
  - Optical marker tracking
- i-Beam (CMS)
  - Transducer-mounted camera, backlit calibration plate

Technologies

Process considerations

- Patient selection
  - Body habitus
    - Very large patients may not image well (but they might)
    - Very thin patients may not image well
    - Unfavorable relative locations of targets and obstructions
    - Unfavorable tissue acoustics (very dense tissues)
  - Prescreen patients for suitability
  - Inability to maintain moderately full bladder
Process considerations

- **CT simulation and target delineation**
  - Structures must be contoured for dosimetric treatment planning and (separately?) for alignment
  - Asymmetric planning target volumes could lead to confusion during US alignment
  - Consider that US alignment may emphasize boundaries. Contrast and attention to sagittal views is important for sup/inf alignment
  - Acquire CT scans with as small a slice spacing as practical

- **Treatment planning**
  - Yields beam arrangements and isodose configurations
  - If isodose contours used for patient alignment need to remain mindful of possible deliberate asymmetries

- **Patient positioning and treatment**
  - Need departmental policies regarding management of unacceptable images (bladder refilling, alternative imaging modalities (MV, kV imaging))
  - Need departmental policies regarding minimum and maximum shifts.

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**Intra v. Inter modality alignment**

- Soft tissues appearance is imaging modality dependent
- Residual spatial errors may be resolved/reduced via intra-modality alignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CT/US</th>
<th>US/US</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: Differences (in millimeters) in the present 215 CT/US and US/US plans for the largest RL, coronal, and sagittal views (6A, x, and p directions).*

*Note: CT = computed tomography, US = ultrasound, p = p value.*
Uncertainty propagation

- Lasers
  - Simulation suite
  - Table sag
  - Drift
- CT imaging
  - Pixel size (400mm FOV/512 = 0.8 mm)
  - Slice thickness
  - Soft tissue contrast (technique, dose, noise)

Contouring
- User precision, esp. in sup/inf dimension
- Treatment planning contours v. alignment contours
- US image resolution/quality
  - Function of depth, esp. for 3D systems
  - Non-isotropic
  - Noise
  - Compromised penetration depth
  - Artifacts
- US spatial registration/calibration
  - Mechanics (phantom, camera, arm, transducer/holder integrity)
  - User upkeep
  - Target deformation, mobility

Recommended QA procedures
Geometric/Spatial Accuracy

- Laser alignment (daily)
  - 1 mm
  - Treatment room and simulator suite
  - Especially true for Sonarray (camera calibration directly dependent on laser alignment)
- Positioning constancy (daily)
  - 2 mm
  - Test over range of interrogation angles
  - Specifics are vendor dependent

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Basic US unit controls (daily)
- TGC, brightness/contrast
IR camera verification (daily)
- Typical 60 minute warm up required
- ≤ 4 mm deviation prior to warm up
- Mechanical stability
Phantom stability (quarterly)
- Desiccation
- Mechanical trauma
- ≤ 1 mm
- Repeat CT scan
Recommended QA procedures
Geometric/Spatial Accuracy

- Positioning constancy (monthly)
  - Performed by physicist
  - Helps ensure skill maintenance
  - Separate and overt camera calibration verification
  - Observe gradual shifts that may go undetected daily
  - < 2mm

- Phantom offset test (monthly)
  - Performed by physicist
  - Offset in 3 dimensions and verify that alignment procedures return it to correct position.
  - May be done daily
  - < 2mm

End-end testing (annually)

- Acquire reference CT (and reference US if applicable)
- Structure segmentation
- Set up in treatment room using lasers
- Perform US alignment
- < 2mm
- Test for objects near isocenter and those displaced from isocenter by at least 3 - 5 cm.

Laser offset test (monthly)

- Simulation suite, if applicable
- Verify proper alignment and transfer of isocenter information for systems used in the simulation suite
- Phantom is offset from zero position by a clinically appropriate distance
- Isocenter is set at this new position
- Co-registration of CT/US image sets should produce good alignment
- Alternate between zero and non-zero offsets

Did not provide quantitative guidelines
- Frequency is semi-annual, consistent with ACR practices
- All criteria are in comparison to baseline
- Spatial resolution
- Low contrast resolution
- Sensitivity
- Hardware degradation
Imaging phantoms

Training

- Experienced users
  - have improved reproducibility
  - Better structure recognition
- Initial manufacturer training
  - Trainers should have significant clinical experience
  - Involve local US experts during initial training period
- Continuing Clinical Training
  - Define regular meeting schedule for quality improvement/image review
  - May want to keep user log of number of cases

To do US right

- Use intramodality matching
- Use matching contours, not treatment planning contours
- High resolution CT, esp in the Sup/inf dimension
- Consider whether interfaces or prostate center of mass is the desired matching objective
- Screen patients at sim and do not use for patients that don’t image well
- Find prostate using lots of probe pressure, then back off until just visible.
- Do a lot of it

Conclusions

- US localization can be accurate and provide good soft tissue detail not available with other systems
- Accuracy depends on details of total clinical procedure train
- Frequent use and training are key