

APRIL 2022

Australasian Brachytherapy Group

# Newsletter



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**#ABG2023**

**SAVE THE DATE!!!**

ABG 32nd Annual Scientific Meeting on 9th -11th February 2023 in Sydney.

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## Hello from the ABG Chairperson Sylvia van Dyk



Dear Members,

I am very proud to be the new Chairperson of the ABG and look forward to working with you to continue to promote brachytherapy within our professional communities to ensure its continued development and use. We must also work together to let the wider medical community understand the benefits of brachytherapy. Most importantly, we must reach out to patients, so they are aware of brachytherapy and have the opportunity to consider it amongst all the treatment options available to them.

The last two years have truly been 'unprecedented' with many brachytherapy departments scaling back services to ensure there were sufficient staff to run radiotherapy departments and to allow for surges in hospital admissions. The planning, the pivoting, the swivelling, the collaboration undertaken to continue radiotherapy services would surely make a fascinating film both from the logistical and personal points of view. Thankfully, both Australia and New Zealand are emerging from lockdowns, border closures and restricted movements. Many radiotherapy departments developed special protocols during these times often converting brachytherapy to external beam treatment using truncated courses of treatment, hypofractionation and even single fractions. Fortunately, many of these protocols are now reverting to normal and brachytherapy services are again being restored.

I sincerely thank Dr Andrej Bece for his leadership during this time. The ABG kept going! We delivered two outstanding virtual conferences and a virtual clinical workshop. All were enthusiastically embraced, and all received glowing feedback. The ABG committee is contemplating the nature of the next ASM in 2023 as we hope the return to COVID normal continues. There is no doubt we all miss face to face meetings, and we will watch how the world emerges and handles these meetings. We thank our industry sponsors for all their support over the last two years as they helped us 'go virtual' for the ASMs and the workshop. We look forward to continuing our close and collegiate relationship with them.

The ABG hopes to grow its membership such that every practising Radiation Oncologist, Physicist and Radiation Therapist in Australia and New Zealand joins us. A strong brachytherapy community will ensure continued growth and expansion of brachytherapy services. Importantly, a strong connected community will ensure the highest standards of technical excellence are achieved and maintained so that we provide the best clinical outcomes for our patients. The ABG is committed to promoting educational and training opportunities for members and look forward to expanding these in the coming months.

The ABG committee is truly made up of some seriously long term passionate brachy practitioners but there were a few changes at the last AGM. We thank Cath Beaufort OAM for the many hats she has worn within the ABG over the years. She is a force of radiotherapy and brachytherapy. We will miss her. We also thank Lindsey Hamlett and David Wood for their contributions to the ABG. It is now my pleasure to introduce some new faces, Angelo Katsilis (RT from Royal Adelaide) who will be taking over web master duties and newsletter production; David Chang (Rad Onc from Peter Mac) and Stephanie Miller (RT from Alfred Health). Please do visit our website to meet the rest of the ABG committee.

The ABG will continue to work to promote, expand, educate, and train brachytherapy practitioners from all craft groups and the best way to keep in touch is through ABG membership, the ABG website, and social media. We have a vibrant Twitter account, @AusBrachy, and we welcome you to follow, tag and contribute to it. Our favourite hashtags are **#ThisIsBrachytherapy #brachytherapy #brachy #SeeWithSound**

Dr Sylvia van Dyk PhD  
Chair – Australasian Brachytherapy Group  
April 2022

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## ABG Website & Membership

The new website is now live. The ABG invites the brachytherapy community to take a look at **[www.abg.org.au](http://www.abg.org.au)** . Please renew membership or join us to help grow our community.

Payment can be made through PayPal and tax receipts will be issued automatically.

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## A Message from our 2022 Platinum Sponsors

### BRACHYTHERAPY GIVING HOPE TO PATIENTS

Brachytherapy has always been an indispensable part of radiation therapy and will play an even more important role in the future.

With the release of Elekta Studio\* and the new ImagingRing offering real-time imaging for various indications, a new chapter of brachytherapy is emerging.

The outcomes of the EMBRACE-I Study have been published, showing unprecedented results when using IGBT techniques as described in various GEC-ESTRO protocols and EMBRACE publications.<sup>1</sup> The use of sophisticated applicators that allow a combination of intracavitary and interstitial treatment techniques will offer potential for further improvements for patients with local diseases (e.g. IIIb) and for patients with asymmetric CTV-THR.<sup>2</sup>

A very interesting new technique to treat tongue cancer is currently being developed at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) /USM's Advanced Medical and Dental Institute (AMDI) in Penang, Malaysia, under the leadership of Dr. Gokula Kumar Appalanaido and Dr. Muhamad Yusri Musa.<sup>3</sup>

USM/IPPT successfully developed a new technique, which combines Brachytherapy with External Beam, that can potentially cure the cancer without having to remove infected parts of the tongue.

Dr. Gokula and Dr. Yusri presented their technique and initial results during Elekta's ABS 2022 workshop, which triggered a lot of interest.

Elekta is actively involved in projects and innovation, offering hope to everyone dealing with cancer and experiencing difficult times by supporting new treatment techniques and offering high quality, sophisticated applicators as recommended in respective publications.

\*Elekta is the authorized Exclusive Distributor of medPhoton in Brachytherapy. ImagingRing is a product manufactured by medPhoton GmbH. ImagingRing may not be available in all markets.

[elekta.com/products/brachytherapy](https://elekta.com/products/brachytherapy)



Dr. Gokula (5th person from left) and the team at USM

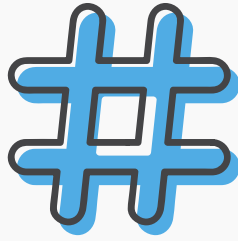
#### References

•Pötter R, Tanderup K, Schmid M, et al. MRI-guided adaptive brachytherapy in locally advanced cervical cancer (EMBRACE I): a multicenter prospective cohort study. *Lancet Oncol.* 2021; 22(4): 538–547.

•Tan LT, Tanderup K, Kirisits C, et al. Image-guided adaptive radiotherapy in cervical cancer. *Semin Radiat Oncol.* 2019; 29(3): 284–298.

•<https://news.usm.my/index.php/english-news/6592-hybird-usm-develops-new-pioneering-technique-in-treating-tongue-cancer>





## Social Media

Engage with the worldwide brachytherapy community and

join us on Twitter [@AusBrachy](https://twitter.com/AusBrachy)



#ThisIsBrachytherapy

Tweet and post responsibly

Ahmed *et al.* [Public](#) disclosure on social media of identifiable patient information by health professionals content analysis of Twitter data Journal of Medical Internet Research 2020 22 (9) e19746

### 2022 ABG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

#### **Chair**

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#### **Vice Chair**

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#### **Immediate Past Chair**

Andrej Bece - [andrej.bece@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:andrej.bece@health.nsw.gov.au)

#### **Secretary**

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