DESCRIPTION

The overarching mission of Practical Radiation Oncology is to improve the quality of radiation oncology practice. PRO’s purpose is to document the state of current practice, providing background for those in training and continuing education for practitioners, through discussion and illustration of new techniques, evaluation of current practices, and publication of case reports. PRO strives to provide its readers content that emphasizes knowledge “with a purpose.” The content of PRO includes: Original articles focusing on patient safety, quality measurement, or quality improvement initiatives Original articles focusing on imaging, contouring, target delineation, simulation, treatment planning, immobilization, organ motion, and other practical issues ASTRO guidelines, position papers, and consensus statements Essays that highlight enriching personal experiences in caring for cancer patients and their families Teaching cases that present a diagnostic, ethical, or management challenge. Watch a presentation from Dr. Robert Lee, Editor of PRO

PRO is the sister publication to the International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology, Physics and Advances in Radiation Oncology. Click here to see which types of papers these journals typically accept.

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INTRODUCTION

Practical Radiation Oncology (PRO) is a peer-reviewed journal whose purpose is to document the state of radiation oncology practice. PRO publishes original clinical research related to the practice of radiation oncology and related disciplines. Concise manuscripts that focus on imaging, contouring, target delineation, simulation, treatment planning, immobilization, organ motion, patient safety, quality measurement, and other practical issues are of particular interest. PRO intends to provide its readers with content that emphasizes knowledge "with a purpose."

W. Robert Lee, M.D., M.S., M.Ed. serves as the journal’s Editor-in-Chief. He can be contacted at the Department of Radiation Oncology, Duke University Medical Center, Box 3085, Durham, NC 27710. Phone: (919) 668-5640; fax: (919) 668-7345; e-mail: pro@astro.org

PRO can be accessed online at www.practicalradonc.org.

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PRO accepts submissions and correspondence electronically, and the Elsevier Editorial System (http://ees.elsevier.com/practicalradonc) is a Web-based system that enables authors to track their submissions online.

Authors must register with the PRO electronic manuscript system. Those who have previously reviewed or submitted a manuscript for PRO may already be registered. Once the submission files are uploaded, the system automatically generates an electronic PDF proof used for reviewing. All correspondence, including editor decisions and requests for revisions, is conducted by e-mail through EES or pro@astro.org

Article Types and Guidelines

Editorials

The Editor-in-Chief may solicit an Editorial to accompany an accepted manuscript. Authors may submit editorials that are unrelated to a specific article or related to important research published in another journal.

a) Requirements Disclosure forms - Available at www.icmje.org/coi_disclosure.pdf, this form must be completed by each author and submitted with the manuscript. b) Limitations

Editorials should not exceed 1,500 words and 10 references.

Critical Reviews

The Editor-in-Chief typically solicits Critical Reviews, but authors may submit an unsolicited review for consideration. The manuscript must present significant new information to justify publication. Critical Reviews will be reviewed in the same manner as Original Reports.

a) Requirements Cover Letter (Preferred) - The cover letter introduces the manuscript to the Editor-in-Chief and briefly summarizes the purpose or intent of the research.

Abstract - Abstracts for Critical Reviews should summarize the content of the article and include the purpose of the study, the experimental design, the most important results, and an interpretation of the data, including the conclusion and any implications derived from the results.

Disclosure forms - Available at www.icmje.org/coi_disclosure.pdf, this form must be completed by each author and submitted with the manuscript. b) Limitations Abstract - 300 words or fewer.

Manuscript - 4,500 words, including the abstract, references, figure legends, and tables.

References - 50 or fewer (additional references may be published online in an appendix).

Figures and Tables - Not to exceed 8 total (includes both tables and figures).
Correspondence
Authors may respond to a published article or express an opinion in a short, freestanding piece. If the Correspondence refers to a published article, the Editor-in-Chief may choose to invite a reply. Correspondence is reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief for possible inclusion in the journal. Letters and replies must be submitted electronically using EES.

Limitations
Letters must be limited to no more than 400 words and 10 references.

Special Articles
Special Articles are manuscripts whose content and style do not fall under the categories of Original Reports or Critical Reviews. These may include but are not limited to guidelines, summaries of consensus meetings, and other scholarly communications.

Teaching Cases
PRO invites case reports with high-resolution images, preferably in color (additional charges may be necessary), including X rays or scans of characteristic or classic conditions relevant to radiation oncology, for consideration in the Teaching Case section. All identifying information of patients, such as names, dates of birth, dates of service, or patient identification codes must be removed. If the case report or the image includes individually identifiable health information, authors must comply with the applicable privacy laws and obtain a HIPAA-compliant patient authorization form.

a) Requirements

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Disclosure Forms - Available at www.icmje.org/coi_disclosure.pdf, this form must be completed by each author and submitted with the manuscript. b) Limitations Do not include an abstract.

Manuscript - 1,500 words, including the title page, main text, references, figures, and tables.

References - 50 or fewer (additional references may be published online in an appendix).

Figures and Tables - Not to exceed 8 total (includes both tables and figures).

Original Reports
Original Reports are the primary mode of scientific communication in PRO. Authors are encouraged to review the "Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals" prior to submission. The Editor-in-Chief and a Senior Editor review all Original Reports. All submitted manuscripts are reviewed by external peer reviewers, and when required, a biostatistician. Comments offered by external reviewers are returned to the author(s) for consideration. Authors should focus
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- **Abstract** - The abstract should be structured using the following subheadings: Purpose, Methods and materials, Results, and Conclusions. The Abstract should reflect the content of the article and include the purpose of the study, the experimental design, the most important results, and an interpretation of the data, including the conclusion and any implications derived from the results.

- **Introduction** - The Introduction section should include the background and rationale for the study, a clear purpose or hypothesis statement, and a brief description of the experimental design.

- **Methods and Materials** - The Methods and Materials section should describe the materials and the experimental and statistical methods used. Previously described methods should not be included, only cited, with significant modifications stated. Clinical studies should be identified as retrospective or prospective. Methods should not be included in the Results section or figure legends.

- **Results** - The Results section should describe only the most important results of the study and include as little discussion as possible. Measures of statistical significance must be clearly indicated, and tables and figures should be cited in numerical order.

- **Discussion** - The Discussion section should begin with a statement of the conclusions based on the study's findings and include an interpretation of the results in the context of other published studies. The study's limitations and implications should also be stated. The conclusions can be included in this section or presented separately under the heading "Conclusions." They should be clearly tied to the purpose of the study. Background information, methods, and results should not be repeated in detail in the Discussion.

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**Disclosure Forms** - Available at www.icmje.org/coi_disclosure.pdf, this form must be completed by each author and submitted with the manuscript. b) **Limitations** No more than 20 authors.

**Cover Letter** - No restrictions.

**Title Page** - Restrict to one page, if possible.
Blinded Manuscript - 4,000 words (including title page, abstract, body text, references, figure legends, and tables).

Abstract - 300 words or fewer (included in 4,000 word overall count).

Figures and Tables - Not to exceed 8 total (includes both tables and figures).

Interesting Images

PRO invites interesting high-resolution images, preferably in color, including X rays or scans of characteristic or classic conditions relevant to radiation oncology. Exceptional images may be considered for the cover of the journal.

a) Requirements and Limitations Include a brief overview describing the case.

Do not include an abstract. Limit text to 400 words or fewer.

All identifying information of patients, such as names, dates of birth, dates of service, or patient identification codes must be removed.

If the image includes individually identifiable health information, authors must comply with the applicable privacy laws and obtain a HIPAA-compliant patient authorization form.

Technical Reports

PRO invites technical reports, which are brief 2- to 3-page descriptions of new developments, devices, or procedures. Technical Reports are concerned with innovations that might enhance practice or address specific challenges in radiation oncology.

a) Requirements Cover Letter (Preferred) - The cover letter introduces the manuscript to the Editor-in-Chief and briefly summarizes the purpose or intent of the research.

Title Page (with author details) - The title page should include a concise but informative title; a complete byline (see Authorship), including each author's full name and highest earned academic degree(s); each author's complete affiliation(s), including department(s), institution(s), city, state, and country; the name and complete mailing address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address of the corresponding author (to whom all correspondence and reprint requests will be directed); and a shortened running title. Acknowledgment of grant or other financial support, meeting presentation, conflict of interest, or assistance with manuscript preparation or data collection should be included here in an Acknowledgments section.

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Manuscript - 1500 words, including the title page, main text, references, figures, and tables.

References - 50 or fewer (additional references may be published online in an appendix).

Figures and Tables - Not to exceed 8 total (includes both tables and figures).
Narrative Oncology

PRO invites Narrative Oncology commentaries that describe the unique challenges in the radiation oncology profession throughout the world. These commentaries are generally invited but we also welcome unsolicited articles of this type.

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**Blinded Manuscript** - Include a brief overview describing the case and a concise literature review. When preparing a manuscript for submission, it is critical that the authors remove all author-identifying information. Institution and author names within the text should be substituted with generic phrases, such as "the institute" or "the author(s)." Where appropriate, authors may also substitute generic characters, such as "XXXX." Manuscripts that are not compliant with this requirement will be returned without exception.

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**b) Limitations**

Do not include an abstract.

**Manuscript** - 1,500 words, including the title page, main text, references, figures, and tables.

**References** - 50 or fewer (additional references may be published online in an appendix).

**Figures and Tables** - Not to exceed 8 total (includes both tables and figures).

**BEFORE YOU BEGIN**

**Ethics in Publishing**

Please see our information pages on Ethics in publishing and Ethical guidelines for journal publication.

PRO maintains a zero-tolerance policy when addressing allegations of plagiarism, duplicate publication (self-publication), data falsification, and scientific misconduct. Articles will be retracted if ethics violations are substantiated. Plagiarism is defined by the World Association for Medical Editors (WAME) as the "use of others' published and unpublished ideas or words (or other intellectual property) without attribution or permission, and presenting them as new and original rather than derived from an existing source." PRO participates in the CrossCheck/iThenticate program to investigate incidents of possible plagiarism.

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All animal experiments should comply with the ARRIVE guidelines and should be carried out in accordance with the U.K. Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act, 1986, and associated guidelines, EU Directive 2010/63/EU for animal experiments, or the National Institutes of Health guide for the care and use of Laboratory animals (NIH Publication No. 8023, revised 1978) and the authors should clearly indicate in the manuscript that such guidelines have been followed.

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**Guidelines for Reporting Preclinical Research**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) held a workshop in June 2014 with the Nature Publishing Group and Science on the issue of reproducibility and rigor of research findings with journal editors representing over 30 basic/preclinical science journals in which NIH-funded investigators have most often published. The workshop focused on identifying the common opportunities in the scientific publishing arena to enhance rigor and further support research that is reproducible, robust, and transparent. The journal editors came to consensus on a set of principles to facilitate these goals. The PRO editorial board have chosen to uphold the high standards for preclinical research reporting established by the workshop, and we attach the summarized recommendations here. Please pay particular attention to these before submission.

**Conflict of Interest**

All authors are requested to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest including any financial, personal, or other relationships with other people or organizations within 3 years of beginning the submitted work that could inappropriately influence, or be perceived to influence, their work. See also https://www.elsevier.com/conflictofinterest. Further information and an example of a Conflict of Interest form can be found at: http://service.elsevier.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/286/supporthub/publishing. PRO adheres to the policy on conflict of interest promulgated by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), which states, in part, that "to prevent ambiguity, authors must state explicitly whether potential conflicts do or do not exist." (See Conflict of Interest Notification.) All authors are required to include an ICMJE form with submission, available for free download at http://www.icmje.org/. Authors also must state their disclosures on the title page of the manuscript. If there are no disclosures, authors must say, "Conflict of interest: none."

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PREPARATION
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PRO uses a double-blind review process in which authors do not know the identity of their reviewers, nor do the reviewers know the identities of the authors. Please see Files for Submission section for when to exclude author, institution, and trial identification details. The Senior Editors select external reviewers from a database of experts, many of whom are Editorial Board members. The Editors encourage authors to suggest names of potential reviewers, although there is no guarantee that these reviewers will, in fact, review the submission. Reviewers provide comments for the Editors and the authors and recommend one of the 4 decisions listed below. The Editor assigned to the manuscript reads all reviews and forwards a recommendation to the Editor-in-Chief. The Editor-in-Chief approves all accept and reject decisions.

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