

JKCCN E-Newsletter Supplement, 7/1/09: RTOG Semiannual Meeting

The RTOG semiannual meeting was recently held on June 25-28, 2009, in Chicago, IL. Please see below for some important updates and announcements!

In the Spotlight

At the General Session held on Saturday, special mention was made of the top accruing RTOG affiliates. One of the top accruing affiliate institutions was Northeast Radiation Oncology Center (NROC) with twenty-five (25) patients enrolled to RTOG studies in 2008. Congratulations!

Audit Update

In 2008, the RTOG audit team held a total of 68 audits. Thirty (30) were considered “Acceptable,” thirty-two (32) were designated “Acceptable, requires follow-up,” and six (6) were “Unacceptable.” RTOG main and affiliate institutions are audited at a minimum of once every 36 months.

Audit Tip: If a patient starts study treatment the same day as s/he signs the consent form, please write the time of consent on the signature page to document the sequence of events during that day.

Protocol-Specific Updates

Protocols opened during the past year include RTOG 0436, 0537, 0539, 0619, 0712, 0813, 0825, 0828, and 0841.

Accrual highlights, per disease site:

Brain: RTOG 0825 was activated by RTOG in May 2009 and has accrued 11 of 720 patients.

Breast: RTOG 0413/NSABP B-39: activated March 2005, accrued 3505 of 4300 (1646 enrolled directly through RTOG).

Gastrointestinal: RTOG 0822: activated April 2008, accrued 43 of 75.

Genitourinary: RTOG 0415: activated April 2006, accrued 923 of 1067 (projected to close October 2009). Please note that RTOG 0521 is also nearing completion (projected to close August 2009) with 575 of 600 patients accrued.

Head & Neck: RTOG 0619: activated November 2008, accrued 2 of 170. Please note that RTOG 0522 recently closed after 943 patients were accrued.

Lung: RTOG 0617: activated November 2007, accrued 102 of 500.

Please see <http://www.rtog.org> for complete descriptions of all trials and accrual numbers for currently active trials (within the “Protocols” tab).

Your Participation Requested

The RTOG Research Associate (RA) Steering Committee has created a survey designed to help them address your comments and concerns. They would also like to learn about the diversity and experience of the RTOG membership. Please take 5-10 minutes to complete the survey on Survey Monkey by July 15, 2009, using the following link:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=tvLC6SWCNsHNVi17P9shlQ_3d_3d. If you have any questions please contact Terry Thomas at Theresa@azoncology.com or 602-240-3383.

The RTOG Mentor Committee is seeking protocol experts to be mentors for other RTOG research associates who may need assistance. Please contact Kelly Shipman at 215-955-2135 or kelly.shipman@jeffersonhospital.org if you are interested in learning more about this opportunity.

Special Trial Focus

One of the sessions held on Friday was specifically directed toward research associates and pertained to RTOG 0614, which is entitled “A Randomized, Phase III, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Trial of Memantine for Prevention of Cognitive Dysfunction in Patients Receiving Whole-Brain Radiotherapy.” This trial examines whether memantine given during and after WBRT helps to preserve cognitive function. A significant feature of this trial is the neurocognitive evaluation component, which consists of a series of objective, standardized performance-based tests of neurologic function. This is in contrast to subjective, patient-reported outcomes, which are also captured in this trial if the patient also consents to that QOL component. One must undergo online training in order to administer the objective, standardized tests. Dr. Jeffrey Wefel, the Neurocognitive Co-chair for this trial, spoke about this trial component, emphasizing that the outcome of a patient’s cognitive function is completely dependent on the individual research coordinator’s capture of these data.

If you have an RTOG-related question, please contact Kelly Shipman at kelly.shipman@jeffersonhospital.org or 215-955-2135.