PRINCESS MARGARET CANCER CENTRE
CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

HEAD AND NECK

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW
Introduction

These documents are head and neck cancer treatment guidelines prepared by the membership of the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) Head and Neck Site Group. This document contains guidelines relevant to the management of epithelial malignancies arising in the head and neck. It does not contain information relevant to the management of endocrine, hematologic or mesenchymal malignancies.

The management of head and neck cancer requires a multidisciplinary approach to treatment decision-making and delivery. New patients should be assessed by all members of the multidisciplinary team prior to the implementation of treatment. Management decisions should be regularly discussed in the context of peer review rounds. It is mandatory that every treatment team develops and implements an active quality assurance (QA) process, and that treatment results be regularly reviewed in comparison to industry standards for both cancer control and treatment toxicity. The supportive care of patients undergoing treatment for head and neck cancers requires the availability of an expert symptom management team, facilities for in-patient admission when required, placement of enteral feeding support, and surgical intervention when indicated.

The radiation treatment approaches described in this document require a support infrastructure containing the elements necessary for state-of-the-art planning and delivery of intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT), linked to a thorough process of quality assurance. All fractionation schemes described are intended to be delivered with IMRT in a one-phase plan with multiple dose levels administered concomitantly (simultaneous integrated boost). All patients undergo CT simulation and treatment within a fixed immobilization system and patient position is verified daily on the treatment unit utilizing cone-beam CT data-sets matched to the planning CT data-set as described herein. Margins chosen for target volumes, as well as dose limitations to critical normal structures recommended within this document, reflect careful assessment and QA to determine the inherent set-up variability applicable to the PMH Radiation Medicine Program planning and treatment process, and may not be applicable to patients treated at other centers.

- These policies are the property of the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) Head and Neck Site Group. They should not be interpreted out of context. At all times the responsibility of the care of any individual patient remains that of the treating physician and prevails over the views of any group. Any formal use of these policies should only be undertaken under the direction of a member of the PMH Head and Neck Site Group. The PMH Head and Neck Site Group accepts no responsibility for the care of any patient beyond these parameters.
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