



Normal tissue injury induced by photon and proton therapies

Mechanisms, Gaps and Opportunities

Kraków, 13.05.2021

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Outline

- ✓ Proton *vs.* photon therapy data for normal tissue injury (clinical trials)
- ✓ Impact of normal tissue response on radiotherapy process optimization mechanisms
- ✓ Normal tissue response pre-clinical studies
- ✓ Gaps and opportunities
- ✓ Future directions





Due to physical properties, protons and heavy ions deposit energy more selectively than

X-rays, allowing a higher local control of the tumor.

Thus, the damage induced in normal tissues surrounding the tumor is limited.

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The general aim for radiotherapy is to assist optimisation of cancer cells killing while minimising harmful effects to normal tissue of individual patients.

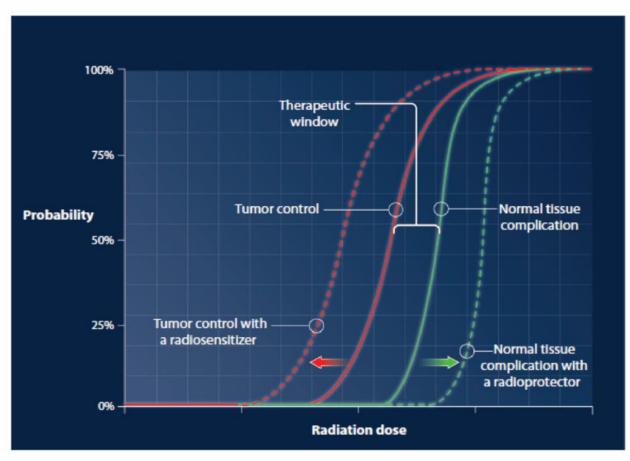


Fig. 1. An idealized graphical representation of tissue effects vs. radiation dose.

13.05.2021 *New paradigms and future challenges in radiation oncology ...,* Liauw SL. et al.

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The tumor and the surrounding microenvironment are closely related and interact constantly.

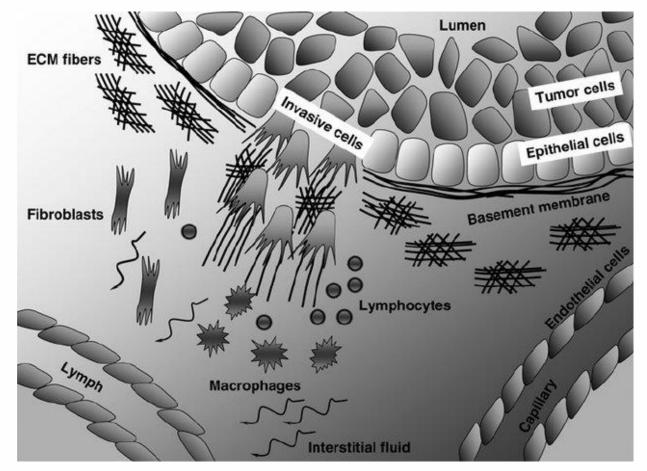


Fig. 2. A scheme of tumor microenvironment components.



A steady increase in PT literature is observed



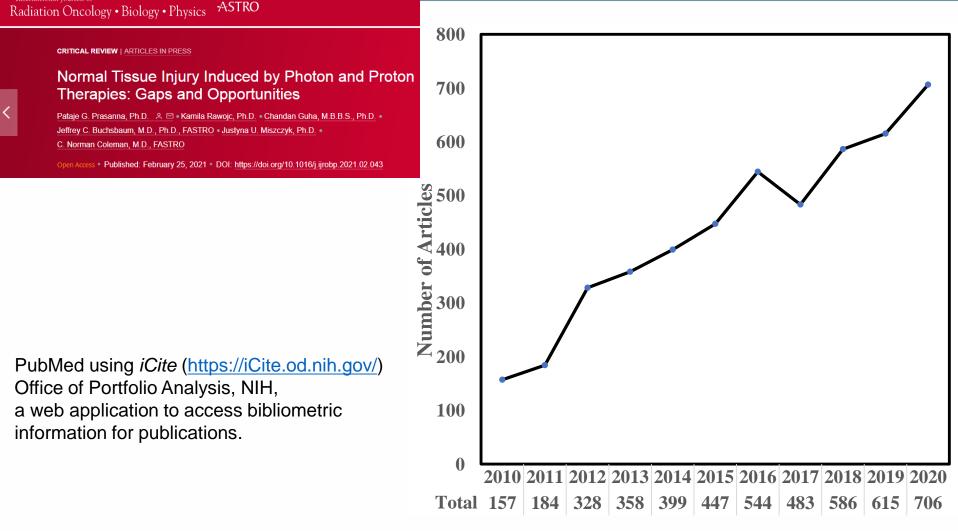


Fig. 3. Number of articles published in PT during the last decade.

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Article Type	Total Publications	Publications/Year		Citations/Year	
			Max	Mean	SEM
All Articles	4807	437	51.88	2.32	0.05

According to the latest updates (2020) of the Particle Therapy Co-Operative Group (PTCOG),

110 particle therapy facilities – in operation37 under construction28 in various stages of planning

More than **220,000 patients** have already undergone PT treatments.

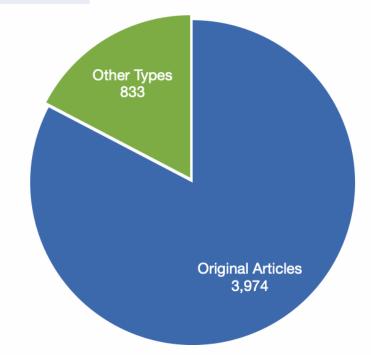


Fig. 4. Summary statistics of PT published articles.

https://www.ptcog.ch/index.php/other-news



As of Dec. 2020 **180 clinical trials**

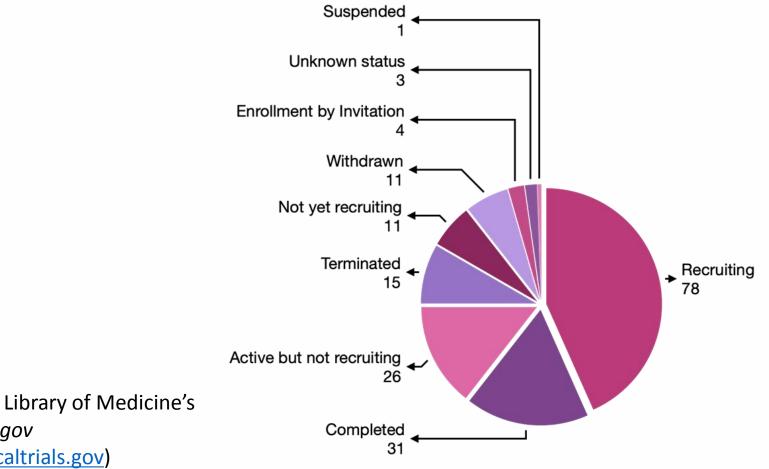


Fig. 5. Details of clinical trials conducted with PT.

U.S. National Library of Medicine's ClinicalTrials.gov (https://clinicaltrials.gov)







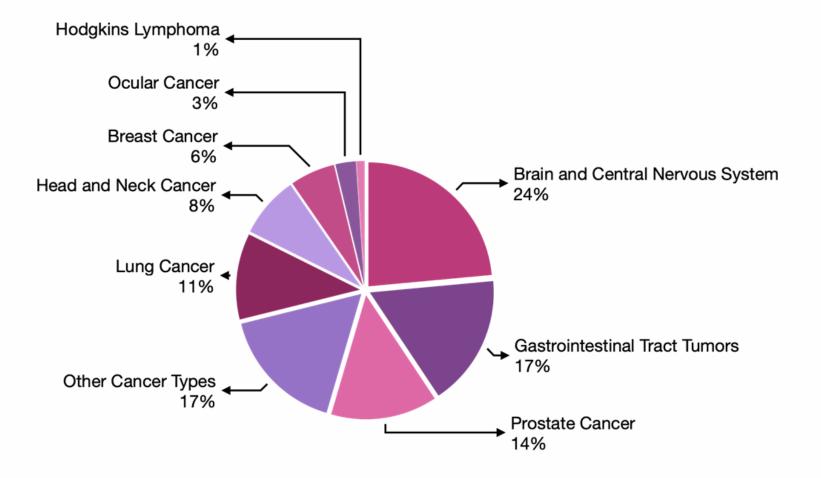


Fig. 6. Percent of clinical trials for different cancer types.

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A head-to head comparison of AEs is desired but difficult



Refence ClinicalTrials.gov ID	Title Status of the trial	Objective Number of participants	Intervention Radiation type	Serious AE Other AE (%)	Authors' Comments
Nantavithya et al. (2018) <i>(NCT01511081)</i>	SBRT <i>vs.</i> SBPT for high-risk early-stage NSCLC Terminated (low accrual)	Phase 2 Randomized to compare SBRT vs. SBPT for side effects, quality of life, cancer control 21	SBRT SBPT	No serious AE with SBRT, metastatic squamous carcinoma of the lung with SBPT Other AE none	No meaningful comparison could be made
Laio et al. (2019) <i>(NCT00915005)</i>	Randomized trial of image-guided adaptive conformal photon vs. PSPT with chemotherapy for NSCLC Completed	Phase 2 Randomized trial to study PSPT vs. IMRT reduces the risk of treatment related pneumonities or tumor recurrence 275	PSPT Photon therapy Paclitaxel Carboplatin	Serious AEs were sig. higher in the PSPT group (38.6%) vs. IMRT (30.4%) p<0.01	PSPT did not provide any benefit in normal tissue toxicity over photon therapy
Lin et al. 2020 <i>(NCT01512589)</i>	Randomized trial of proton beam therapy vs. IMRT for esophageal cancer	Phase 2 Randomized trial to compare PT to IMRT in combination with chemotherapy 180	PT IMRT Fluorouracil Capecitabine Taxane Carboplatin Oxaliplatin	Numerically fewer cardiopulmonary toxicities and post- operative complications in the PT arm	Results are promising, a larger multi- institutional trial is needed

AE – adverse events, NSCLC – non-small cell lung cancer, IMRT – intensity modulate radiotherapy, PT – proton therapy, PSPT – pencil scanning proton therapy, SBPT – stereotactic body proton therapy, SBRT – stereotactic body radiotherapy

Summary of randomized clinical trials that compared proton therapy vs. photon therapy.

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A head-to head comparison of AEs is desired but difficult



Box 1. Key issues that contribute to normal tissue injury with proton therapy

	Key Issues	Contributing Factors
ans,	Uncertainties in the depth of penetration of beams	 Differences in tissue compositions Target movement due to breathing motion, changes in bowel and bladder filling as well as other normal tissue changes
	RBE: LET, dose, fraction, and tissue type	 Contentious use of a fixed RBE value assigned to protons may overdose normal tissue and underdose tumors Strong impact of LET on normal tissue injury is not being included in the RBE definition Not using variable RBE values limits personalization of RT
	Delineation of the target volume	• Difficulty in achieving adequate tumor delineation due to want of high-quality diagnostic imaging i.e., CT-MRI or PET-MRI
nts,	Target Motion	 Changes in tumor location during treatment fractions caused by: discrepancies between day-to-day patient set up procedures breathing peristaltic movement bowel movement heart beats organ filling

Abbreviations: CT-MRI, computed tomography-magnetic resonance imaging; LET, linear energy transfer; PET-MRI, positron emission tomography-magnetic resonance imaging; RBE, relative biological effectiveness; RT, radiotherapy

- ✓ Differences in treatment plans,
- ✓ Fractionantion schemes,
- ✓ Total dose,
- ✓ Patient characteristics,
- ✓ Tumor location,
- ✓ Medications and other agents,

surgical history etc.





- ✓ Despite technological advances in RT patients still experience adverse effects. Irradiation of normal tissue is almost unevitable. Normal tissue is an important determinant of the outcome.
- ✓ While a steady increase in PT literature is observed, mostly non-randomized early phase clinical trials with a relatively small number of patients are enrolled. Retrospective analysis and single arm studies will likely favor PT.

Proton therapy with favourable dose delivery can improve treatment outcomes vs. benefit in normal tissue toxicity

Dosimetric benefit does not ensure PT has more favorable clinical outcomes but does form a basis for comparative prospective trials.

To fully benefit from PT and justification of costs, comparative and prospective large-scale well-designed clinical trials are necessary incorporating suitable biological determinants (panels before, during or after) to optimizing treatment process.

Proton Therapy: the Problem? Does it make any sense to spend over \$100 million on a proton facility, with the aim to reduce doses to normal tissues and then to bathe the patient with a total body dose of neutrons", Hall, Technol in Ca Res Treat 2007;6:31-34.





Experimental studies on the biological effects of proton irradiation are

relatively sparse and focus mostly on different cancer cells response and RBE.

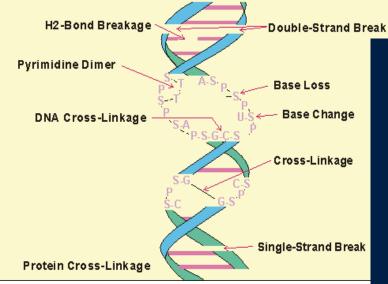
There is an unmet need to recognize the possible differences in the mechanisms of

radiation injury and the normal tissue toxicities with different radiation types.

THE HENRYK NIEWODNICZAŃSKI INSTITUTE OF NUCLEAR PHYSICS POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES Radiation interactions with biological, complex systems



RADIATION DAMAGE TO DNA



The DNA is the critical target to induce lethal effects as a result of radiation exposure.

> Radiation can induce damage either by direct action or indirect action (free radicals).

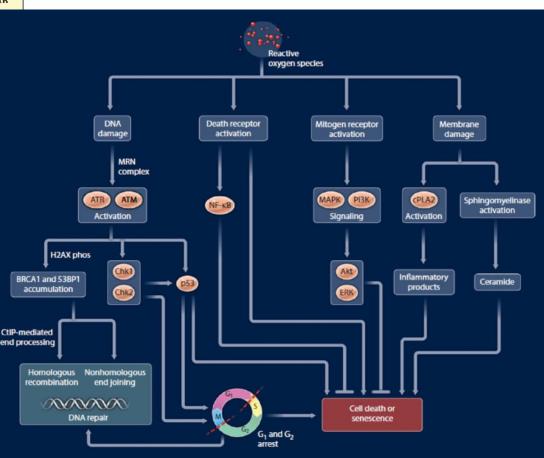


Fig. 7. Various cellular targets and responses that occur after radiation exposure.

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New paradigms and future challenges in radiation oncology..., Liauw SL., Connell PP&Weichselbaum RR. *http://www.radiologyandphysicalmedicine.es/radiation-induced-lesions-in-dna/*



A modulation of normal tissue response can be expected in all dose ranges



Circulating lymphocytes represent normal tissue and traffic throughout the body including

irradiated tumor volume.

Following

a standard

regime of thirty

fractions of 2Gy,

pool has been

than 0.5 Gy.

exposed to more

98.8% of the blood

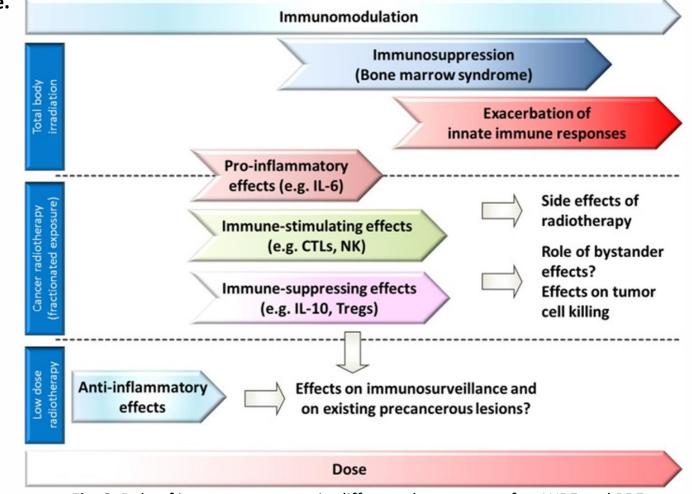


Fig. 8. Role of immune response in different dose ranges after WBE and PBE.

Intercellular communication of tumor cells and immune cells after exposure to different ionizing radiation qualities..., Diegeler S&Hellweg CE. 13.05.2021 Ultra-high dose rate (FLASH) radiotherapy: silver bullet or fool's gold? Wilson JD et al.





Normal Functions

G1

Cell growt

Cell Cycle (Replicating)

Final

protein

Predominantly in a resting G0 phase, consist of T and B cells.

- Synchronous and homogeneous cell population.
- Circulate throughout the body and can be stimulated to undergo mitosis, recirculation time~ 12h, 80%. Even when a small part of the body was irradiated – dosimetry is possible.
- Involved in many key mechanistic roles following exposure to radiation therapy, persistence of DNA damage 3.5 years.
- Used to interrogate radiation injury to normal tissue during tumors irradiation (critical targets for radiotherapy and immunotherapy). Blood taking is not-invasive.

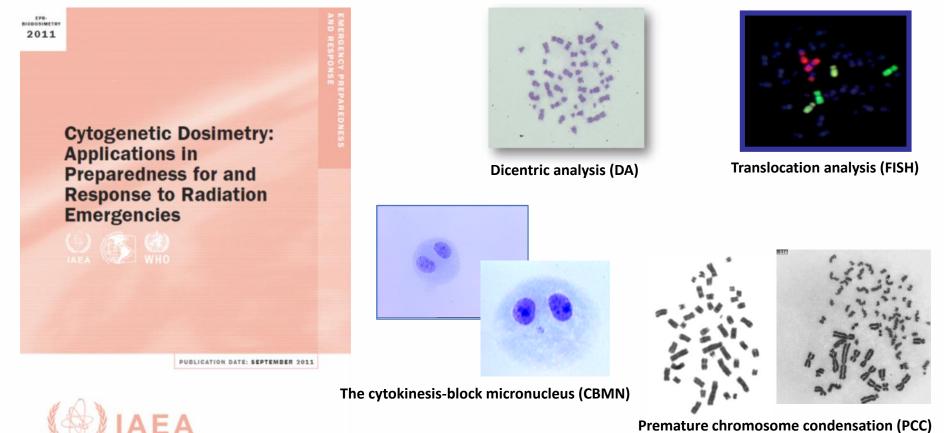
HPBL is a well-accepted model to study the effects of radiation on normal tissue.



Methods used for dose and DNA damage assessment



DSBs are critical lesions and their misrepair or non-repair are involved in the formation of chromosome aberrations.



Time-consuming, expensive, up to 4.0 Gy, protocols...

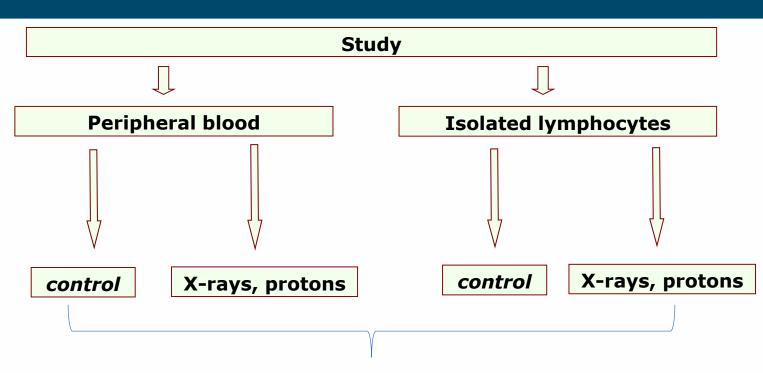
nternational Atomic Energy Agency

Every laboratory must optimize protocols and obtain own calibration curves.

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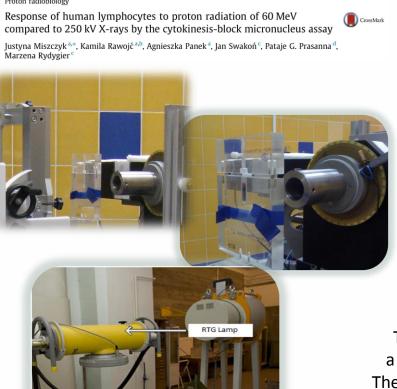
- To prepare phantom, laboratory and optimize methods for low and high radiation dose assessment
- To study the response of normal tissue after protons vs. photons (DNA damage, cell death, cell cycle)
- To propose mechanisms of molecular and cellular injury by protons in HPBLs.

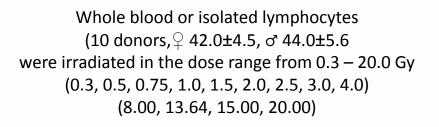
Approval from the human bioethical committee of the Regional Medical Board (No. 124/KBL/OIL/2013) and (184/KBL/OIL/2020).

Response of human lymphocytes to proton radiation of 60 MeV..., Miszczyk et al., Radiotherapy and Oncology, 2015.

Study design – phantom and irradiations







vials. A specially designed PMMA - Poly(methyl methacrylate) phantom was placed at the irradiation setup isocentre (in the middle of SOBP) and in the centre of the flat beam. Average dose rate 0.075 Gy/s.

Cells were irradiated with a 60 MeV proton beam in 2-cm Eppendorf The radiation was delivered at a dose rate of 0.15 Gy/s by a Philips X-ray machine (MCN 323 model, Philips) at 250 kV. The vials were placed in a polyethylene box; radiation field-size was 20x20 cm², and the source to surface distance was 34.8 cm. Radiation system

Radiotherapy and Oncology 115 (2015) 128-134 Contents lists available at ScienceDirect Radiotherapy and Oncology journal homepage: www.thegreenjournal.com

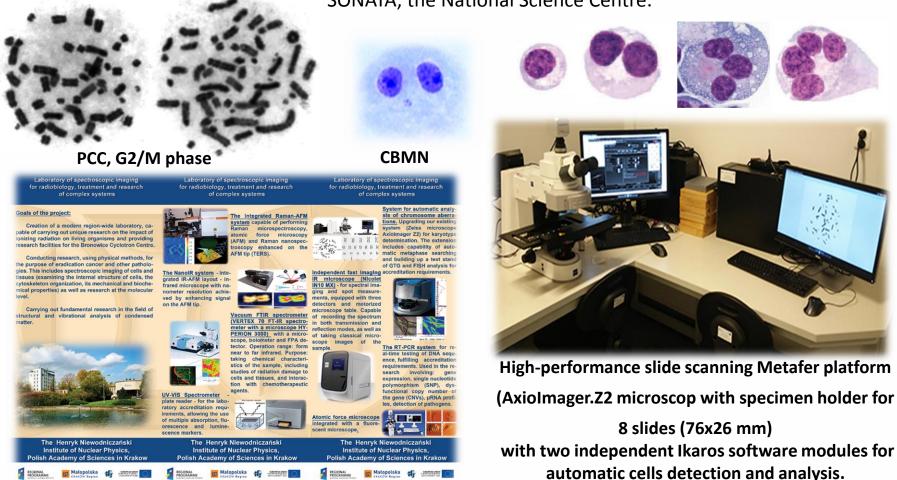
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Proton radiobiology

The new, leading edge laboratory



"Development and optimization of PCC (*Premature Chromosome Condensation*) method for the purposes of proton radiotherapy at the Cyclotron Center Bronowice", SONATA, the National Science Centre.



Multimodal approach for ionizing radiation damage investigation, Kwiatek W. et al. https://los.ifj.edu.pl/en/index.html HUMN project: detailed description of the scoring criteria..., Fenech M. et al.

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Radiation

Protocols and triage modes

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Dose [Gy]

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International Journal of Radiation Biology Biology 3000 150 G2/M- PCC phase cells post X-rays irradiation 150 G2/M- PCC phase cells post post protons irradiation ISSN: 0955-3002 (Print) 1362-3095 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/irab20 75 G2/M- PCC phase cells post X-rays irradiation 2500 75 G2/M- PCC phase cells post proton irradiation Evaluation of the premature chromosome condensation scoring protocol after proton and X-ray irradiation of human peripheral blood 2000 lymphocytes at high doses range K. Rawojć, J. Miszczyk, A. Możdżeń, J. Swakoń & A. Sowa-Staszczak 1500 0 Gy 10 Gy 1000 5 Gy 8Gy 500 20 Gy 13,64 Gy 15 Gy 18 Gy Fig. 9. Comparison between 150 vs. 75 G2/M cells scoring modes for all scorers and both types of radiation.

PCC micrographs in G2/M phase post proton irradiation

Similar distribution trends for both scoring modes were observed.



Protocols and triage modes





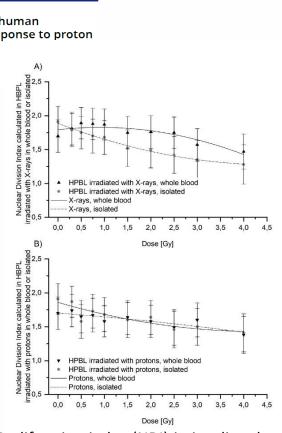
International Journa	l of Radiation Biology
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ISSN: 0955-3002 (Print) 1362-3095 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/irab20

Effects of culturing technique on human peripheral blood lymphocytes response to proton and X-ray radiation

Justyna Miszczyk & Kamila Rawojć

The isolation process did not significantly influence the cell proliferation ability after irradiation.





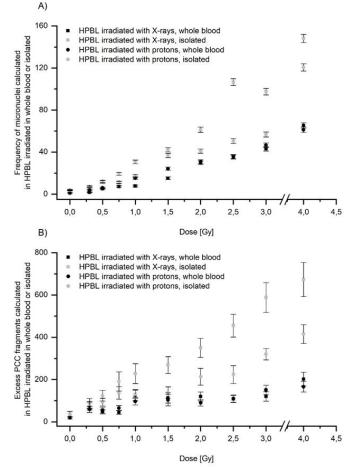


Fig. 10. Proliferation index (NDI) in irradiated cells with X-rays and protons, blood vs. isolated cells.

Fig. 11. DNA damage in irradiated cells with protons and X-rays, cultured in two different techniques.



Protocols and triage modes



Similar trends in estimated biomarkers between different treatment conditions were observed.

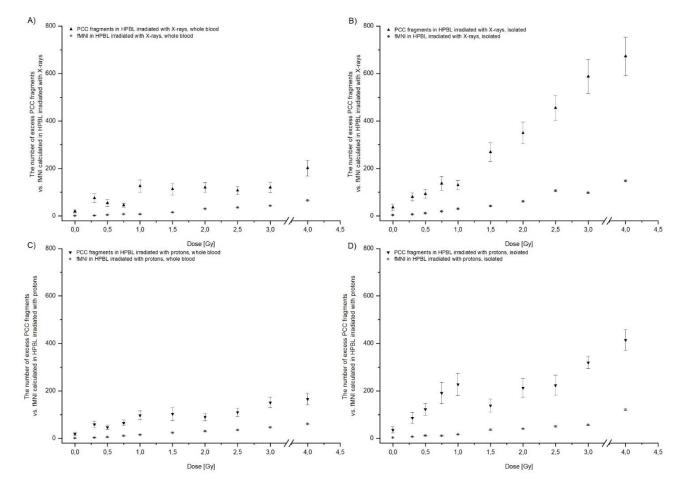
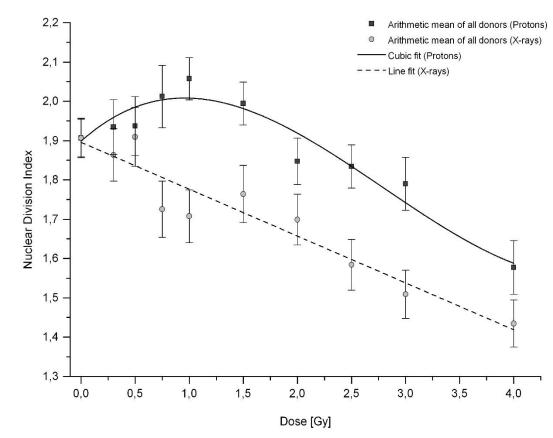


Fig. 12. Comparison of biomarkers in isolated or whole blood cultured lymphocytes post X-ray and proton irradiation.



Normal tissue response - cellular proliferation 0.3-4.0 Gy





Compared to X-rays, cellular proliferation after irradiation with protons was significantly higher in HPBL for all doses within the range of 0.75-4.0 Gy.

At dose above 1.0 Gy for both radiation types a gradual and progressive decline was seen.

Fig. 13. Dose-effect relationship for NDI in HPBLs following irradiation with protons and X-rays.

Protons and X-rays influence HPBL cellular proliferation to different degrees.

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Normal tissue response - DNA damage 0.3-4.0 Gy



Most likely, protons and photons induce DNA damage in HPBL by different mechanisms.

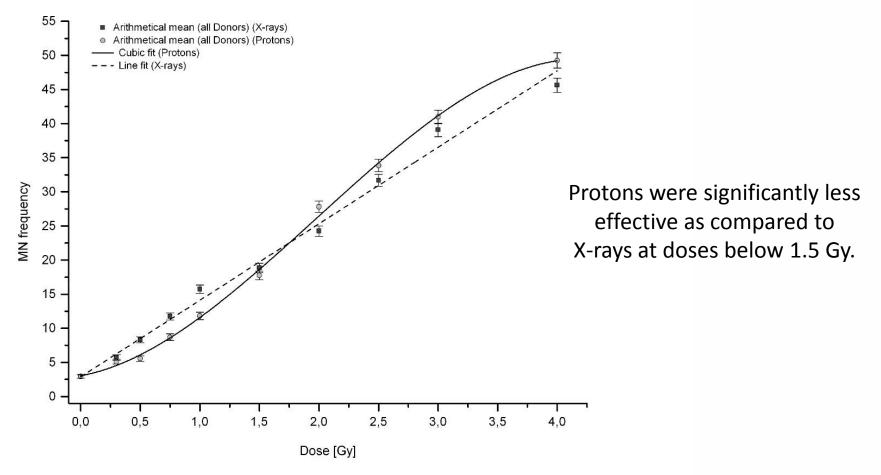


Fig. 14. Dose-response curves for DNA damage for both radiation types.

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Inter-individual variability 0.3-4.0 Gy



Extent of difference varies among donors without correlation with radiation type.

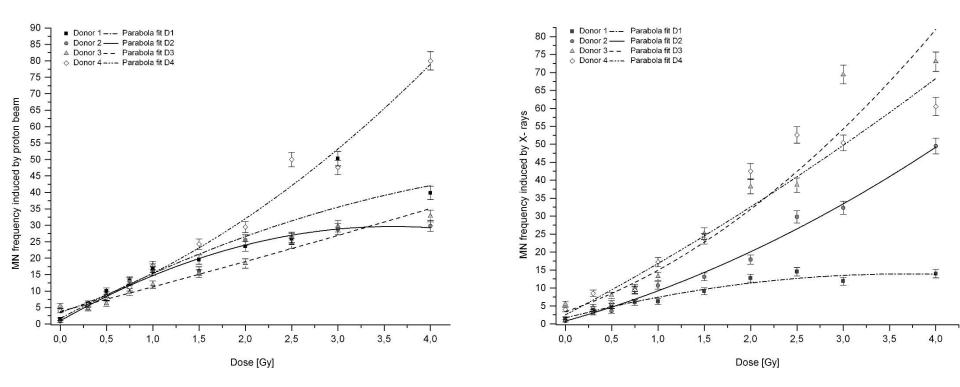


Fig. 15. The dose-dependent relationship between DNA damage for the proton beam and X-rays among individuals.

At lower proton doses curves overlapped with each other, differences were more pronounced at doses above 1.0 Gy.

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DNA damage distribution 0.3-4.0 Gy



Distribution of DNA damage following irradiation with protons and photons is different.

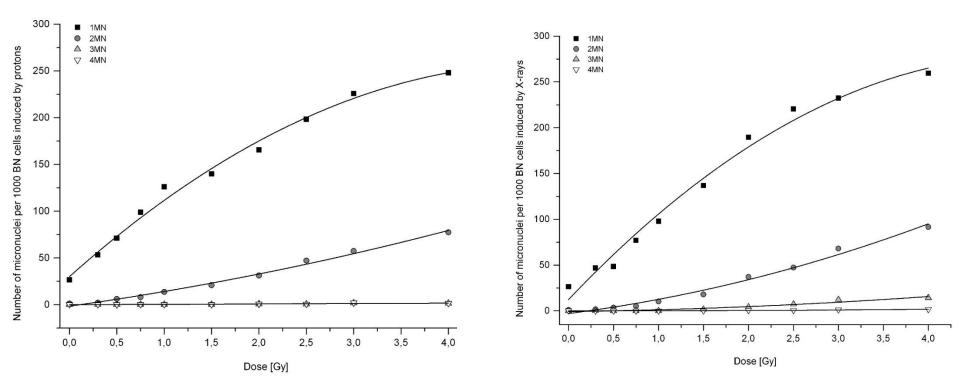


Fig. 16. The dose-response relationships for the protons and X-rays and various number of micronuclei (1, 2, 3 and 4) in 1000 BN cells as an average for all donors.

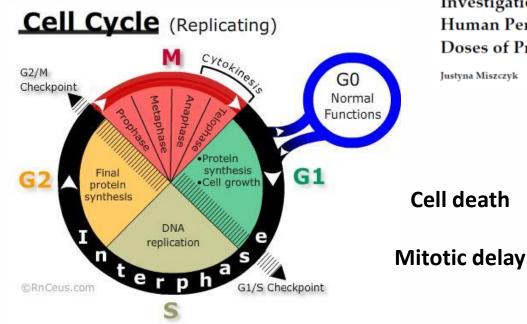
Locally multiply damaged sites or clustered DNA damage?

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Normal tissue response following exposure to high doses





This article belongs to the Special Issue **Applied Physics in Cancer Cells**

MDPI

Article Investigation of DNA Damage and Cell-Cycle Distribution in Human Peripheral Blood Lymphocytes under Exposure to High **Doses of Proton Radiotherapy**

biology

The effects and mechanisms of a single high-dose delivery remain unclear.

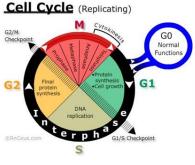
Pre-clinical studies have suggested that RT, especially higher doses of 20-25 Gy can substantially stimulate anti-tumor T-cell immunity and increase the T-cell response to help control tumor growth.



Cellular proliferation 8.0-20.0 Gy



X-rays	G1	S	G2	Μ	Α	Nucleated	
8.00	0.05	1.90	4.45	0.05	0.25	93.30	
13.64	0.05	1.60	2.20	0.00	0.00	96.15	
15.00	0.00	1.50	2.00	0.00	0.00	96.50	
20.00	0.00	1.25	1.45	0.00	0.00	97.30	G2/M Check
							-
Protons [Gy]	G1	S	G2	Μ	Α	Nucleated	G2
	G1 0.00	S 1.65	G2 2.80	M 0.05	A 0.70	Nucleated 94.80	G2 ©RnC
[Gy]							
[Gy] 8.00	0.00	1.65	2.80	0.05	0.70	94.80	



Percentages of G1, S, G2, M, A phases and nucleated cells at each dose of X-rays or protons.

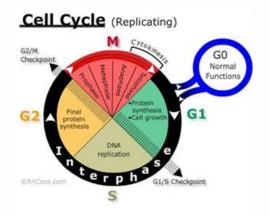
As the dose increases, the number of nucleated cells for both studied types of radiation increases to comperable values.

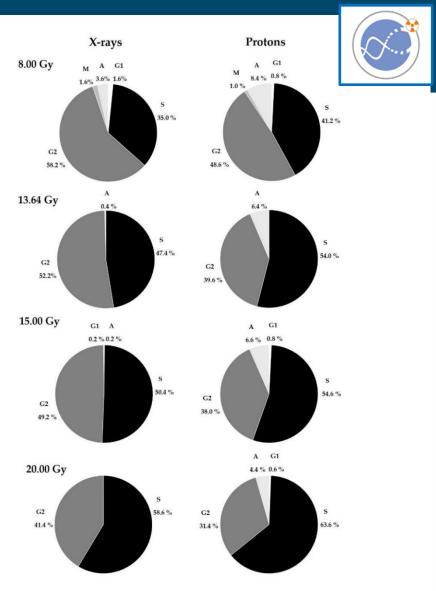
Investigation of DNA damage and cell-cycle distribution..., Miszczyk J. 2021.



The largest proportion of cells were in the S and G2 phases.

For both types of radiation, as the dose increased, the number of S-phase cells also increased and was higher for each dose after proton radiotherapy.





Percentages of cells in the G1, S, G2, M, A phases at each dose after X-rays or protons.



Normal tissue response - DNA damage 8.00-20.00 Gy



High doses of protons induce DNA damage in the G2/M differently than X-rays.

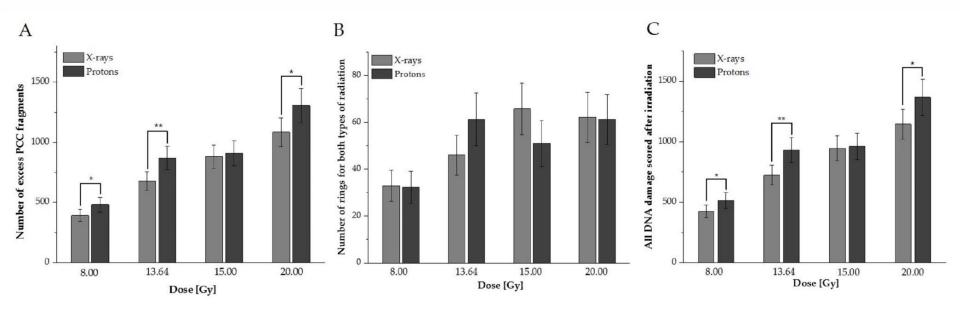


Fig. 17. Average values of DNA damage for HPBLs irradiated with high doses.

For all doses except 15.00 Gy, a higher DNA damage value after proton therapy was observed.





The distribution of DNA damage following high doses of irradiation with protons vs. photons differs between donors, types of radiation, and doses.

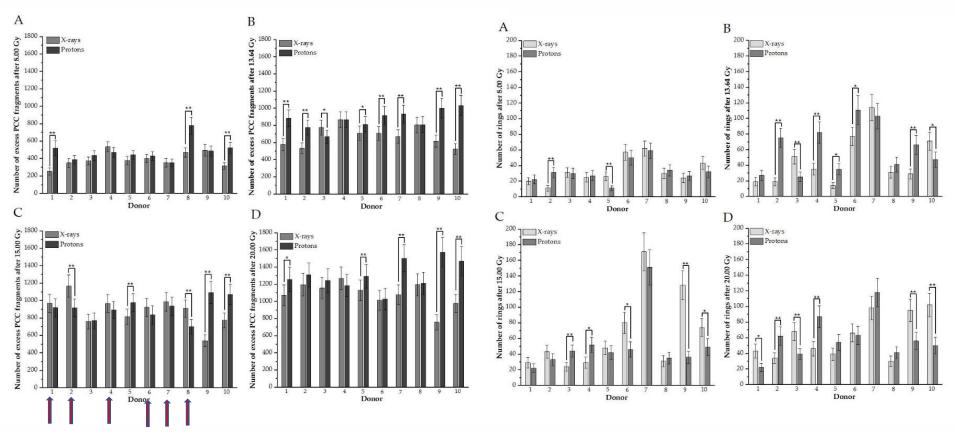
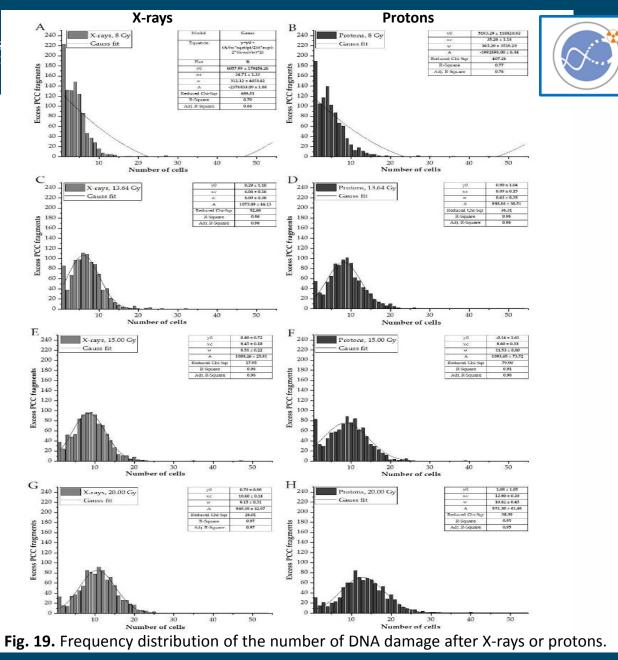


Fig. 18. An individual number of DNA damage for donors irradiated with different doses of protons vs. X-rays.



More scattered distribution for protons vs. X-rays was observed.



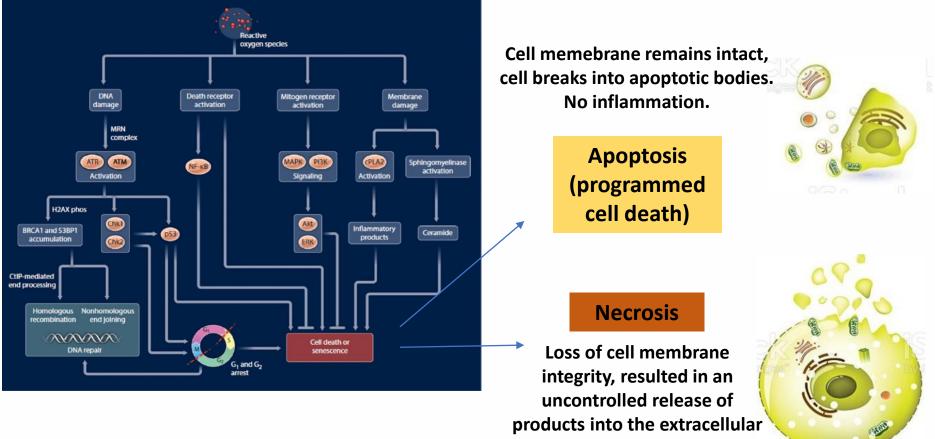
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Investigation of DNA damage and cell-cycle distribution..., Miszczyk J. 2021.





Apoptosis and necrosis are controlled by different molecular pathways.



space. Inflammation.

New paradigms and future challenges in radiation oncology..., Liauw SL, Connell PP&Weichselbaum RR. http://www.radiologyandphysicalmedicine.es/radiation-induced-lesions-in-dna/ https://www.istockphoto.com/pl/wektor/apoptoz%C4%99-i-martwica-r%C3%B3%C5%BCnica-gm528240983-53538844



Cell death visualisation and quantification



Clinical and Translational Radiation Oncology 9 (2018) 23-29

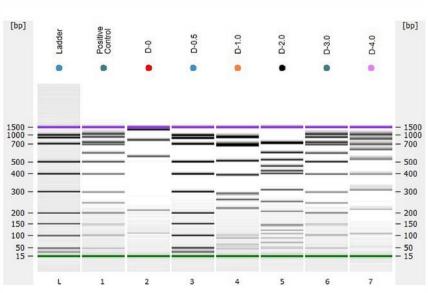


Original Research Article

Do protons and X-rays induce cell-killing in human peripheral blood lymphocytes by different mechanisms?



J. Miszczyk ^{a,*}, K. Rawojć ^b, A. Panek ^a, A. Borkowska ^a, P.G.S. Prasanna ^c, M.M. Ahmed ^c, J. Swakoń ^a, A. Gałaś ^d



Cells after ex vivo irradiation with 3 Gy protons following staining with Apoptotic, Necrotic and Healthy Cells Kit, (Biotium, Hayward, USA).

DNA (chip) fragmentation assay confirmed various degrees of DNA fragmentation. Lanes showed apoptosis, as well as smearing indicative of necrosis.





Proton irradiation resulted in higher apoptotic activity.

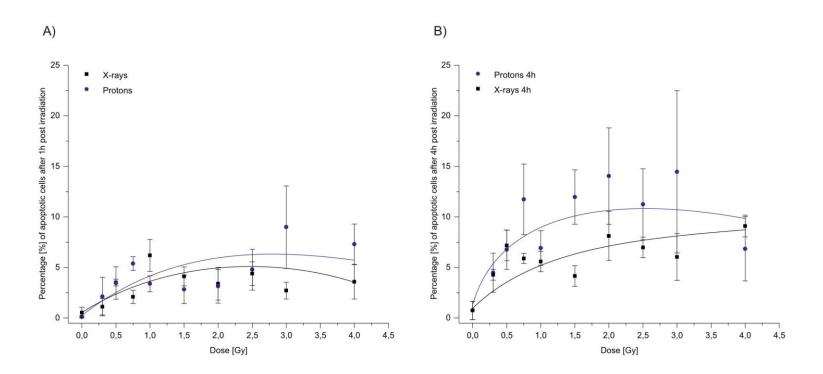


Fig. 20. Percentage of apoptotic cells after irradiation with X-rays vs. protons (1 and 4 h after irradiation).

 THE HENRYK NIEWODNICZAŃSKI
 INSTITUTE OF NUCLEAR PHYSICS POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES Quantitative determination of apoptosis 0.3-4.0 Gy



Original Article

Translational Cancer Research 2018; 7(4):879-889. Check for updates

Therapeutic proton irradiation results in apoptosis and caspase-3 activation in human peripheral blood lymphocytes

Justyna Miszczyk¹, Kamila Rawojć², Anna Maria Borkowska¹, Agnieszka Panek¹, Jan Swakoń¹, Aleksander Gałaś³, Mansoor M. Ahmed⁴, Pataje G. S. Prasanna⁴

Variability between donors and types of radiation is observed.

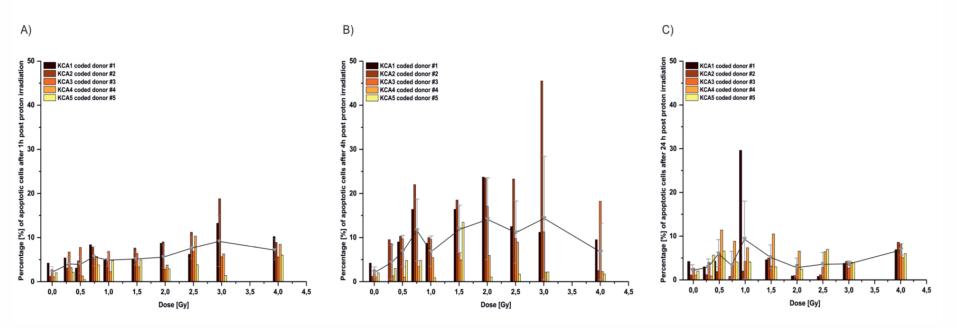


Fig. 21. Apoptotic cells percentage for individuals determined with Annexin V-FITC fluorescent staining in *ex vivo* HPBL model after 1 h, 4 h and 24 h post-proton treatment.





After proton irradiation apoptosis is mediated through caspase-3,

activity is mostly observed at 6 h proton-irradiation, decreased significantly after 24h.

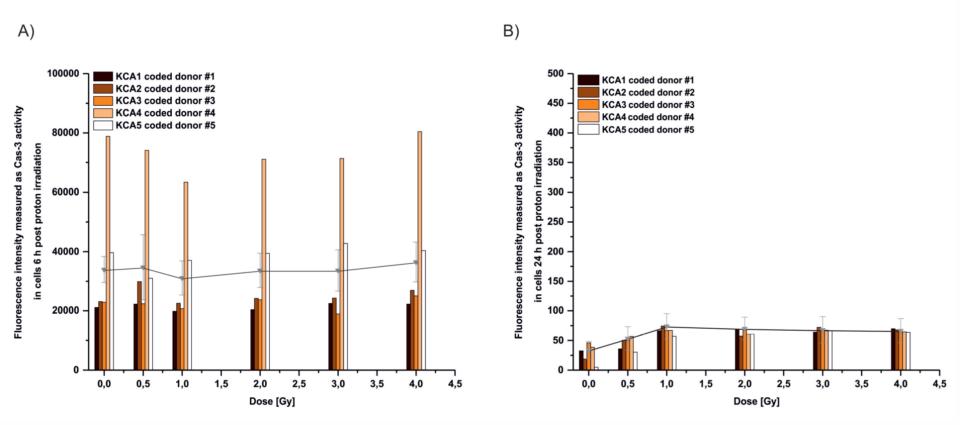


Fig. 22. Differences in caspase-3 activity among donors at 6 and 24 h post proton treatment (HTS assay kit, Biotium).

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Protons are more efficient in cell-killing due to their potential to cause necrosis

in addition to apoptosis, especially at higher doses!

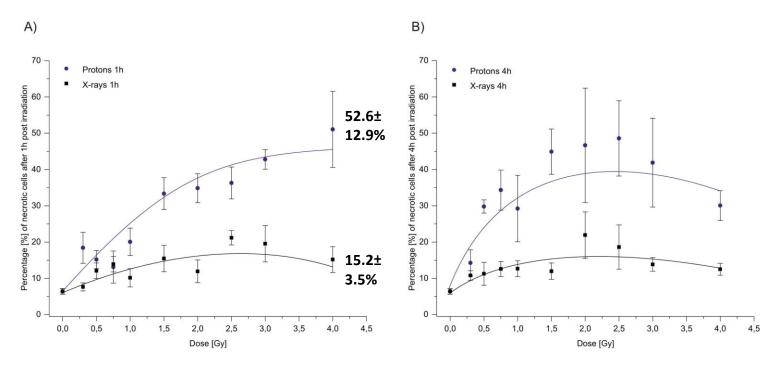


Fig. 23. Percentage of necrotic cells after irradiation with X-rays vs. protons (1 and 4 h after irradiation).





- ✓ HPBLs, phantom, unique position.
- Easy, reliable biodosimetry protocols (PCC, CBMN) and different triage modes post proton and X-rays radiation for low and high dose exposure were proposed (possibility to discriminate whole and partial body exposures).
- ✓ Not only radiation (dose, type, dose-rate) but also the procedural steps determined the cell response to different degrees.
- ✓ Normal tissue response to protons vs. X-rays for low and high doses is different (influence cellular proliferation and DNA damage to different degrees).

Effect depend on radiation type and dose.

Inter-individual differences determine response and effect.

Therefore, potentially influence the type, incidence and itensity of the RT AEs.



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- Protons and X-rays induce cell-killing in normal tissue by different mechanisms.
 Protons are more efficient by necrosis. Inter-individual differences were also observed.
- ✓ Apoptosis is mediated by caspase-3, but necrosis?

Due to physical properties, protons and heavy ions deposit energy more selectively than

X-rays, allowing a higher local control of the tumor.

Thus, the damage induced in normal tissues surrounding the tumor is limited.

Protons are distinct from photons not only concerning their unique dosimetry but also with their ability to invoke unique biological responses that can be differentially exploitable.

Therefore, continued studies of these differences are necessary to benefit from a given type of radiation treatment.

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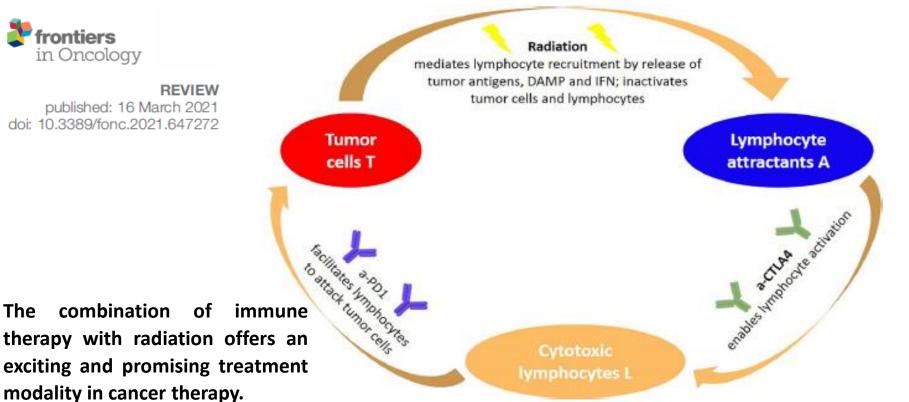
Future directions



Modeling Radioimmune Response – Current Status and Perspectives

Potential sensitizers or radioprotectors can make tumor cells more detectable for immune system.

Thomas Friedrich 1*, Nicholas Henthorn 2,3 and Marco Durante 1,4



General paradigm underlying RT using immune checkpoint blockers.



Future issues





Cancer Treatment Reviews Available online 16 April 2021, 102209 In Press, Journal Pre-proof (?)



Anti-tumour Treatment

Proton beam therapy for children and adolescents and young adults (AYAs): JASTRO and JSPHO Guidelines

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The Japanese Society for Radiation Oncology (JASTRO)

The Japanese Society of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology (JSPHO).

- Careful use of PBT is recommended in adult patients, while sedation is required to maintain pediatric patients at rest.
- ✓ Further validation of irradiation techniques is needed for X-ray and PBT in both pediatric and adult patients.
- These guidelines show the superiority or equivalence of PBT in comparison with X-ray therapy for pediatric tumors.
- ✓ However, brainstem necrosis after PBT is still under discussion and requires further examination.

We need continue to evaluate the long-term efficacy of proton beam therapy for pediatric and adult patients.



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Faculty of Physics, Astronomy and Applied Computer Science Irradiations

Cell's counted

~0.5 mln.

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Image aquisition

Methods used

7; 12

Data were analyzed separately from 3 independent repetitions, by min. 2 independent scorers.

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