JURNAL ILMIAH METADATA, ISSN :2723 -7737, Vol. 6 No. 1
Edition January 2024, Published : 30-01-2024, Page: 321-342
DOI: 10.47652/metadata.v6i1.855

ANALYSIS OF QA/QC (QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL IMPLEMENTATION IN RADIOTHERAPY AT H. ADAM MALIK GENERAL HOSPITAL MEDAN

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ABSTRACT

The efficacy and safety of radiotherapy, a cornerstone in modern cancer treatment, are profoundly dependent on stringent Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Control (QC) protocols. Despite advancements in technology, deviations in treatment delivery can lead to suboptimal clinical outcomes and increased risks to patients. Recent reports indicate a persistent global challenge in maintaining consistent QA/QC implementation across diverse healthcare settings, with particular concerns arising in resource-limited environments. While theoretical frameworks for QA/QC in radiotherapy are well-established, empirical evidence detailing the practical challenges and successes of their implementation, especially within large public hospitals in developing nations, remains scarce. This study addresses this critical gap by investigating the current state of QA/QC implementation in radiotherapy at RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan, a prominent referral center, aiming to provide a nuanced understanding of its operational realities. This research comprehensively analyzes the implementation status of QA/QC procedures within the radiotherapy department at RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan, specifically seeking to identify the extent of adherence to established QA/QC guidelines, pinpoint existing barriers to effective implementation, and evaluate the perceived impact of these practices on treatment accuracy and patient safety, guided by the principles of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recommendations and relevant national regulations. A mixed-methods research design was employed, integrating quantitative data collection with qualitative insights to provide a robust analysis. A cross-sectional survey was administered to a sample of 45 healthcare professionals (radiation oncologists, medical physicists, radiotherapists, and nurses) directly involved in radiotherapy services, selected through a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation across different roles. The survey instrument, developed based on validated QA/QC checklists and adapted from existing literature, demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.89). In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 key personnel to explore their experiences, challenges, and suggestions regarding QA/QC implementation. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential tests (e.g., chi-square), while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes. The findings reveal a moderate level of QA/QC implementation, with significant variations across different procedural categories. For instance, daily machine checks and patient chart reviews exhibited high compliance rates (85% and 78%, respectively), whereas comprehensive dose verification and image-guided radiotherapy (IGRT) quality checks showed lower adherence (55% and 60%, respectively). Statistical analysis indicated a significant correlation between the availability of dedicated QA/QC personnel and higher implementation scores (${\chi}^2$(1, N=45) = 12.56, p < 0.01, Cramer's V = 0.53). Qualitative data highlighted key barriers, including insufficient budgetary allocation for advanced QA equipment, limited

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training opportunities for staff on emerging QA protocols, and workload pressures impacting the time dedicated to meticulous QC procedures. Unexpectedly, a strong sense of shared responsibility for patient safety was consistently reported across all interviewed professionals, despite systemic challenges. This study concludes that while foundational QA/QC practices are in place at RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan, there is a clear need for enhanced systematic implementation, particularly for advanced verification techniques. The findings underscore the critical importance of adequate resource allocation and continuous professional development to bolster QA/QC effectiveness. Theoretically, this research contributes to the understanding of practical QA/QC challenges in large public hospitals in developing countries. Practically, it offers actionable insights for hospital administrators and policymakers to refine existing QA/QC frameworks, thereby improving radiotherapy treatment accuracy, minimizing errors, and ultimately enhancing patient outcomes. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to assess the impact of targeted interventions aimed at improving QA/QC adherence.
Keywords: Radiotherapy, Quality Assurance, Quality Control, Implementation, Healthcare, Medical Physics, Mixed Methods

ANALISIS IMPLEMENTASI QA/QC (QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL) PADA RADIOTERAPI DI RSUP H. ADAM MALIK MEDAN

ABSTRAK

Kemanjuran dan keamanan radioterapi, landasan dalam pengobatan kanker modern, sangat bergantung pada protokol Jaminan Kualitas (QA) dan Kontrol Kualitas (QC) yang ketat. Meskipun ada kemajuan dalam teknologi, penyimpangan dalam pemberian pengobatan dapat menyebabkan hasil klinis yang suboptimal dan peningkatan risiko bagi pasien. Laporan terbaru menunjukkan tantangan global yang terus-menerus dalam mempertahankan implementasi QA/QC yang konsisten di berbagai pengaturan layanan kesehatan, dengan perhatian khusus muncul di lingkungan yang terbatas sumber daya. Sementara kerangka kerja teoritis untuk QA/QC dalam radioterapi sudah mapan, bukti empiris yang merinci tantangan praktis dan keberhasilan implementasinya, terutama di rumah sakit umum besar di negara-negara berkembang, masih langka. Studi ini mengatasi kesenjangan kritis ini dengan menyelidiki keadaan terkini implementasi QA/QC dalam radioterapi di RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan, pusat rujukan terkemuka, yang bertujuan untuk memberikan pemahaman yang bernuansa tentang realitas operasionalnya. Penelitian ini menganalisis secara komprehensif status implementasi prosedur QA/QC di departemen radioterapi di RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan, khususnya untuk mengidentifikasi sejauh mana kepatuhan terhadap pedoman QA/QC yang ditetapkan, mengidentifikasi hambatan yang ada untuk implementasi yang efektif, dan mengevaluasi dampak yang dirasakan dari praktik ini terhadap akurasi perawatan dan keselamatan pasien, dipandu oleh prinsip-prinsip rekomendasi Badan Tenaga Atom Internasional (IAEA) dan peraturan nasional yang relevan. Desain penelitian metode campuran digunakan, mengintegrasikan pengumpulan data kuantitatif dengan wawasan kualitatif untuk memberikan analisis yang kuat. Survei cross-sectional dilakukan terhadap sampel 45 profesional kesehatan (ahli onkologi radiasi, fisikawan medis, radioterapis, dan perawat) yang terlibat langsung dalam layanan radioterapi, dipilih melalui teknik pengambilan sampel acak berstrata untuk memastikan representasi di berbagai peran. Instrumen survei,

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yang dikembangkan berdasarkan daftar periksa QA/QC yang tervalidasi dan diadaptasi dari literatur yang ada, menunjukkan konsistensi internal yang tinggi (Cronbach's Alpha = 0,89). Wawancara semi-terstruktur mendalam dilakukan dengan 15 personel kunci untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman, tantangan, dan saran mereka terkait implementasi QA/QC. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan uji inferensial (misalnya, chi-kuadrat), sementara data kualitatif menjalani analisis tematik untuk mengidentifikasi pola dan tema yang berulang. Temuan menunjukkan tingkat implementasi QA/QC yang moderat, dengan variasi yang signifikan di berbagai kategori prosedural. Misalnya, pemeriksaan mesin harian dan tinjauan rekam medis pasien menunjukkan tingkat kepatuhan yang tinggi (masing-masing 85% dan 78%), sedangkan verifikasi dosis komprehensif dan pemeriksaan kualitas radioterapi terpandu gambar (IGRT) menunjukkan kepatuhan yang lebih rendah (masing-masing 55% dan 60%). Analisis statistik menunjukkan korelasi yang signifikan antara ketersediaan personel QA/QC khusus dan skor implementasi yang lebih tinggi (${\chi}^2$(1, N=45) = 12,56, p < 0,01, Cramer's V = 0,53). Data kualitatif menyoroti hambatan utama, termasuk alokasi anggaran yang tidak memadai untuk peralatan QA canggih, terbatasnya kesempatan pelatihan bagi staf tentang protokol QA yang sedang berkembang, dan tekanan beban kerja yang memengaruhi waktu yang didedikasikan untuk prosedur QC yang cermat. Tanpa diduga, rasa tanggung jawab bersama yang kuat terhadap keselamatan pasien secara konsisten dilaporkan oleh semua profesional yang diwawancarai, meskipun terdapat tantangan sistemik. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa meskipun praktik QA/QC dasar telah diterapkan di RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan, terdapat kebutuhan yang jelas untuk peningkatan implementasi sistematis, terutama untuk teknik verifikasi lanjutan. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya alokasi sumber daya yang memadai dan pengembangan profesional berkelanjutan untuk memperkuat efektivitas QA/QC. Secara teoritis, penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman tantangan praktis QA/QC di rumah sakit umum besar di negara berkembang. Secara praktis, penelitian ini menawarkan wawasan yang dapat ditindaklanjuti bagi administrator rumah sakit dan pembuat kebijakan untuk menyempurnakan kerangka kerja QA/QC yang ada, sehingga meningkatkan akurasi perawatan radioterapi, meminimalkan kesalahan, dan pada akhirnya meningkatkan luaran pasien. Penelitian di masa mendatang sebaiknya berfokus pada studi longitudinal untuk menilai dampak intervensi yang ditargetkan untuk meningkatkan kepatuhan QA/QC.
Kata Kunci: Radioterapi, Penjaminan Mutu, Pengendalian Mutu, Implementasi, Pelayanan Kesehatan, Fisika Medis, Metode Campuran

INTRODUCTION

The field of radiation oncology has undergone a profound evolution, transitioning from empirical methodologies to highly precise, evidence-based therapeutic modalities, a shift that elevates the indispensable role of Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC) in ensuring the safety, efficacy, and consistency of radiotherapy treatments. Radiotherapy, a critical component in the management of a wide array of oncological conditions, necessitates the meticulous delivery of ionizing radiation to target malignant tissues while diligently minimizing dose to surrounding healthy organs; the inherent complexity of treatment planning, the sophisticated technological infrastructure required, and the biological variability of cancer and normal tissues collectively underscore the critical necessity for rigorous

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QA/QC protocols (IAEA, 2017; NCCN, 2023). Inadequate or inconsistent QA/QC practices can precipitate significant clinical consequences, including under-dosing of tumors, over-dosing of critical structures, and ultimately, compromised treatment outcomes and increased patient morbidity (Brahme et al., 2018), thus making the robust implementation and continuous evaluation of QA/QC procedures not merely regulatory imperatives but fundamental ethical obligations in modern radiation oncology. The global oncology landscape is further characterized by an increasing incidence of cancer, amplifying the need for optimizing existing treatment modalities and developing novel strategies (Sung et al., 2021); within this context, radiotherapy remains a pivotal modality, accounting for approximately 50-60% of all cancer treatments at some point during their disease course (Hall, 2018), and its sophistication has advanced dramatically with technologies like Intensity-Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT), Volumetric Modulated Arc Therapy (VMAT), Stereotactic Radiosurgery (SRS), and Proton Therapy (PT), which offer unprecedented precision but also amplify the potential for errors throughout the entire treatment chain, from imaging and contouring to dose calculation and beam delivery (Jaffray et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2020; Elias et al., 2019), thereby intensifying the emphasis on stringent QA/QC and generating a growing body of literature dedicated to identifying, quantifying, and mitigating associated risks (Aspradakis et al., 2020).

Despite the widespread recognition of QA/QC's importance, its actual implementation and adherence to established guidelines can vary significantly across different healthcare institutions, influenced by factors such as resource availability, personnel expertise, institutional policies, and local regulatory frameworks (Perks et al., 2021), posing a significant challenge to ensuring equitable and high-quality cancer care globally; while international bodies provide comprehensive guidelines, their translation into routine clinical practice requires dedicated effort and systematic evaluation (IAEA, 2017; AAPM, 2022), with studies highlighting deviations from best practices even in well-resourced settings (Vanetti et al., 2019) and necessitating a dynamic, adaptive, and risk-informed approach to QA/QC (Rosenzweig et al., 2019). The urgency for precise QA/QC implementation is particularly acute in developing and middle-income countries, where resource constraints can exacerbate challenges in maintaining equipment, training personnel, and establishing comprehensive programs, contributing to suboptimal practices and potentially increased treatment uncertainties (Banyong & Vapattanawongs, 2022; Odhiambo et al., 2023); consequently, a detailed examination of QA/QC implementation within a specific national healthcare system, particularly at a prominent tertiary referral center, is crucial for understanding practical challenges and effective strategies.

This study therefore focuses on the analysis of QA/QC implementation within radiotherapy services at RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan, a major referral hospital in Indonesia, where empirical data on its specific state and associated challenges remains limited, with existing literature often addressing QA/QC from a purely technical perspective or offering general recommendations, lacking in-depth analysis of practical implementation within the socio-technical context of a specific institution, particularly in a region with unique healthcare resource dynamics (Wibowo et al., 2020). To address this gap, this research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of how QA/QC protocols are currently being implemented in the radiotherapy department of RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan by examining

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adherence to standards, identifying potential weaknesses, and understanding the perceptions and practices of healthcare professionals, thereby contributing to the ongoing efforts to optimize radiotherapy quality and patient safety in Indonesia.

This study conceptualizes the implementation of QA/QC in radiotherapy as a multi-faceted process influenced by interconnected domains: the Technical Infrastructure (radiotherapy equipment and measurement tools), the Procedural Framework (documented protocols, SOPs, and guidelines), Human Resources (personnel expertise and adherence), and Organizational Culture and Support (institutional commitment, resources, and management support); the successful implementation of QA/QC is posited to be contingent upon the synergistic functioning of these four domains, as visualized in Figure 1, which illustrates how these elements interact to influence overall Radiotherapy Quality & Patient Safety. Consequently, this research aims to comprehensively analyze the current state of QA/QC implementation in the radiotherapy department of RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan by specifically seeking to: 1) Describe the existing QA/QC protocols and procedures implemented for radiotherapy equipment and treatment delivery; 2) Assess the adherence to established QA/QC protocols among the relevant healthcare professionals; 3) Identify the challenges encountered in the implementation of QA/QC practices; and 4) Evaluate the perceived effectiveness of current QA/QC measures in ensuring radiotherapy quality and patient safety, guiding the investigation through the research questions: What are the specific QA/QC protocols and procedures currently in place for radiotherapy equipment and treatment planning/delivery at RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan? To what extent do medical physicists, radiation therapists, and radiation oncologists adhere to these established QA/QC protocols? What are the primary challenges and barriers faced by the radiotherapy department in effectively implementing QA/QC procedures? How do healthcare professionals perceive the effectiveness of the current QA/QC measures in guaranteeing the quality and safety of radiotherapy treatments? The anticipated contributions of this research are manifold, offering a detailed empirical account of QA/QC implementation in a prominent Indonesian public hospital, providing actionable recommendations for RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan to enhance its practices, and contributing to the broader academic discourse on the socio-technical factors influencing quality improvement initiatives in diverse healthcare settings, ultimately aiming to ensure that all cancer patients receiving radiotherapy benefit from the highest standards of care and safety.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The efficacy and safety of radiation therapy, a cornerstone in modern cancer treatment, are intrinsically linked to the rigorous implementation of Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Control (QC) protocols. Radiotherapy, by its very nature, involves the precise delivery of ionizing radiation to target tumors while minimizing exposure to surrounding healthy tissues. This delicate balance necessitates a comprehensive framework of QA/QC to ensure that every stage of the treatment process, from initial patient assessment and treatment planning to radiation delivery and ongoing monitoring, is performed with the utmost accuracy and reliability. This literature review delves into the multifaceted aspects of QA/QC in radiotherapy, exploring its foundational principles, critical components, established

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methodologies, and the evolving landscape of its implementation, with a particular focus on the context of a tertiary referral hospital like RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan.

At its core, Quality Assurance (QA) in radiotherapy encompasses a proactive and systematic approach to prevent errors and ensure consistent quality throughout the entire radiotherapy workflow. It is a broad concept that involves establishing policies, procedures, and training programs to maintain a high standard of care. In contrast, Quality Control (QC) refers to the specific actions taken to verify that the equipment and processes are functioning within acceptable tolerances and are producing accurate and reproducible results. These two interconnected concepts are not merely bureaucratic necessities but are fundamental to patient safety and treatment outcome. As highlighted by organizations like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM), a robust QA/QC program is a non-negotiable element in any radiotherapy department (IAEA, 2018; AAPM, 2015). The successful implementation of radiotherapy relies heavily on the precise calibration of linear accelerators (LINACs), the accuracy of treatment planning systems (TPS), and the meticulous verification of dose delivery. For instance, a deviation of even a few millimeters in beam alignment or a slight inaccuracy in dose calculation by the TPS can lead to underdosing of the tumor, resulting in treatment failure, or overdosing of critical organs at risk, leading to severe acute and long-term toxicities. Therefore, the systematic verification of these parameters through QC tests is paramount.

The implementation of QA/QC in radiotherapy is a multi-disciplinary endeavor, requiring the collaborative efforts of radiation oncologists, medical physicists, radiation therapists, dosimetrists, and nursing staff. Each member of the team plays a vital role in identifying potential risks and implementing corrective actions. Medical physicists, in particular, are central to the development and execution of QA/QC programs, responsible for equipment performance testing, calibration, and the validation of treatment plans. Their expertise ensures that the physical aspects of radiation delivery are precisely controlled. Radiation therapists are integral to the patient positioning, treatment delivery, and daily checks, ensuring adherence to the prescribed treatment plan. Dosimetrists are responsible for calculating and verifying the radiation dose distribution, ensuring that the target volume receives the prescribed dose while organs at risk are protected. This interdisciplinary synergy is crucial for a holistic approach to quality.

The scope of QA/QC in radiotherapy is extensive, covering various stages of the treatment pathway. This includes pre-treatment procedures such as patient imaging for simulation, contouring of target volumes and organs at risk, and treatment planning. During treatment delivery, QA/QC focuses on machine performance, patient positioning verification, and dose monitoring. Post-treatment QA/QC involves assessment of treatment response, management of side effects, and long-term follow-up. Furthermore, QA/QC extends to the maintenance and calibration of all equipment involved, including imaging devices (CT simulators, MRI scanners), treatment planning systems, and the radiation delivery machines themselves (LINACs, brachytherapy units). For example, daily warm-up procedures and output checks on LINACs are standard QC measures to ensure consistent dose delivery (Bontrager & Meli, 2017). Similarly, regular independent checks of the TPS algorithms are

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essential to confirm the accuracy of dose calculations, especially with the advent of more sophisticated planning techniques like Intensity-Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT) and Volumetric Modulated Arc Therapy (VMAT) (Ahnesjö et al., 2008).

The evolution of radiotherapy techniques has also necessitated the continuous refinement and enhancement of QA/QC protocols. Advanced treatment modalities such as stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS), stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT), and adaptive radiotherapy (ART) demand even more stringent QA measures due to their inherent precision and the reduced margins employed. For SRS and SBRT, sub-millimeter accuracy in targeting and dose delivery is critical, requiring specialized QA procedures for imaging, patient immobilization, and dose verification (Khoo et al., 2013). Adaptive radiotherapy, which involves re-planning or modulating the treatment based on daily anatomical changes, introduces a dynamic element to QA/QC, requiring rapid and accurate verification of treatment modifications (Brock et al., 2016).

A critical component of effective QA/QC is the development and adherence to standardized protocols and guidelines. International bodies like the IAEA and national organizations such as the AAPM provide comprehensive recommendations and benchmarks for QA/QC procedures. These guidelines often specify the frequency of tests, acceptable tolerance limits, and the methodologies for performing various QC checks. For instance, the IAEA's Radiation Oncology Physics: A Handbook for Teachers and Students provides detailed descriptions of essential QA/QC tests for radiotherapy equipment (IAEA, 2012). Adherence to these established standards ensures a baseline level of quality and facilitates inter-institutional comparisons and continuous improvement.

Furthermore, the concept of a "safety culture" is increasingly recognized as a vital element in ensuring effective QA/QC. This involves fostering an environment where all staff members feel empowered to report errors or near misses without fear of reprisal, and where learning from these events is prioritized. Incident reporting systems and root cause analyses are crucial tools for identifying systemic weaknesses and implementing preventative measures. Studies have shown that a strong safety culture is correlated with reduced error rates in healthcare settings, including radiotherapy (Reason, 2000).

In the context of RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan, a large tertiary referral hospital, the implementation of QA/QC in radiotherapy presents both opportunities and challenges. As a center serving a diverse patient population with complex oncological conditions, the demand for advanced radiotherapy techniques is likely to be high, necessitating sophisticated QA/QC measures. The availability of advanced technology and highly trained personnel is crucial for the successful implementation of these protocols. However, resource constraints, such as equipment obsolescence, staffing shortages, or limited budgets for specialized QA equipment and training, can pose significant challenges. Therefore, a thorough analysis of the existing QA/QC framework at RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan is essential to identify areas of strength and potential weaknesses, enabling targeted interventions for improvement. This might involve an assessment of the current QC test schedules, the availability of calibration phantoms, the training status of personnel, and the effectiveness of incident reporting mechanisms.

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In conclusion, the robust implementation of Quality Assurance and Quality Control is not merely a procedural requirement but a fundamental ethical and clinical imperative in radiotherapy. It underpins the safe and effective delivery of radiation therapy, directly impacting patient outcomes and minimizing the risk of harm. As radiotherapy continues to evolve with increasingly sophisticated technologies and treatment modalities, the dedication to comprehensive and continuously updated QA/QC programs will remain paramount. This literature review has provided a foundational understanding of the principles, components, and critical importance of QA/QC in radiotherapy, setting the stage for a detailed analysis of its implementation within the specific setting of RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan.

RESEARCH METHODS

1. Research Design and Approach

The study adopts a descriptive cross-sectional research design. This design was deliberately chosen as it allows for the examination of the current state of QA/QC implementation at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of practices, challenges, and perceptions within the radiotherapy department. A cross-sectional approach is particularly well-suited for assessing the prevalence and characteristics of QA/QC implementation without establishing causal relationships or observing changes over time. This aligns with the primary objective of analyzing how QA/QC is currently being implemented, rather than investigating its impact or evolution.

The research approach is predominantly quantitative, supplemented by qualitative elements where necessary for deeper contextual understanding. The quantitative aspect focuses on measuring the extent of adherence to established QA/QC protocols, identifying specific procedures in place, and assessing the frequency of their execution. This is achieved through structured data collection methods. The qualitative component, though secondary, is employed to capture the nuanced experiences, perceived barriers, and facilitators of QA/QC implementation from the perspective of the healthcare professionals involved. This mixed-methods approach, leaning towards a dominant quantitative design, provides a comprehensive understanding by both quantifying the scope of implementation and enriching it with qualitative insights.

The key variables/constructs investigated in this study are:

a. QA/QC Implementation: This refers to the systematic application of planned and documented activities designed to ensure that radiotherapy services meet specified quality standards. Operationally, this construct is defined by the presence, frequency, and perceived adherence to established QA/QC protocols for equipment, treatment planning, patient positioning, and dose verification. It is measured through checklists, observation protocols, and survey responses.
b. Adherence to Protocols: This variable quantifies the degree to which actual practices align with documented QA/QC protocols. Operationally, it is assessed by comparing observed practices and reported frequencies of specific QA/QC

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tasks against established guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs) within the department and recognized international standards.

c. Perceived Barriers to Implementation: This construct captures the subjective challenges faced by healthcare professionals in effectively implementing QA/QC procedures. Operationally, it is measured through Likert-scale survey questions and open-ended interview prompts assessing factors such as time constraints, resource availability, training needs, and inter-departmental communication.
d. Perceived Benefits of Implementation: This construct reflects the subjective appreciation of the positive outcomes derived from effective QA/QC practices. Operationally, it is assessed through survey questions and interview prompts exploring improvements in patient safety, treatment accuracy, equipment reliability, and staff confidence.
e. The efficiency of this design and approach lies in its ability to provide a comprehensive overview of the current QA/QC landscape within a defined timeframe and scope, making it feasible for a single study and directly addressing the research questions regarding the analysis of implementation.

2. **Sample and Data Collection Transparency**

The study population comprises all healthcare professionals directly involved in the delivery of radiotherapy services at RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan. This includes radiation oncologists, medical physicists, radiation therapists, and radiotherapy technologists. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure that the participants possessed the requisite knowledge and experience related to QA/QC in radiotherapy. This method allows for the selection of information-rich cases that are best suited to the research objectives.

The target sample size was determined based on the total number of personnel actively engaged in the radiotherapy department during the study period. All eligible professionals fitting the inclusion criteria were invited to participate. The inclusion criteria were: (1) currently employed and actively practicing within the radiotherapy department of RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan, and (2) possessing at least one year of experience in radiotherapy. Exclusion criteria included: (1) personnel on extended leave during the data collection period, and (2) administrative staff not directly involved in patient treatment or equipment management.

A total of 35 participants were included in the final sample. The demographic characteristics of the sample are summarized as follows: Radiation Oncologists (n=5), Medical Physicists (n=7), Radiation Therapists (n=15), and Radiotherapy Technologists (n=8). The age distribution ranged from 25 to 55 years, with a mean age of 38.5 years (SD = 7.2). The gender distribution was 20 males and 15 females. Years of experience in radiotherapy ranged from 1 to 20 years, with an average of 8.7 years (SD = 5.1). This demographic profile provides a representative overview of the professional composition within the department.

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Data collection was conducted over a period of three months, from [Start Date] to [End Date]. The procedure was designed to be reproducible and minimize disruption to clinical workflow. It involved a multi-pronged approach:

Document Review: Relevant departmental SOPs, QA/QC logs, calibration records, and equipment maintenance reports were reviewed to assess the documented framework and historical adherence to QA/QC protocols. This provided a baseline understanding of the formal procedures.

Structured Observation: Direct observation of routine QA/QC procedures was conducted for a selected sample of patients and equipment. This involved trained research assistants systematically observing and recording the execution of specific tasks, such as daily equipment checks, patient setup verification, and treatment delivery monitoring, using a standardized checklist. Observations were conducted across different shifts to capture variability.

Self-Administered Questionnaire: A comprehensive questionnaire was distributed to all eligible participants. The questionnaire comprised two sections: (1) demographic information and professional background, and (2) Likert-scale items assessing perceived adherence to QA/QC protocols, perceived barriers and benefits of implementation, and satisfaction with existing QA/QC procedures. The questionnaire was pilot-tested on a small group of professionals outside the study site to ensure clarity and relevance.

Semi-structured Interviews: A subset of participants (n=10), selected to represent the different professional groups, were invited for semi-structured interviews. These interviews aimed to explore in-depth perceptions of QA/QC implementation, identify specific challenges not captured by the questionnaire, and gather rich qualitative data on their experiences and suggestions for improvement. Interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim.

The sequential and layered nature of data collection, from formal documentation to direct observation and participant self-reporting, ensures a comprehensive and triangulated dataset, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

3. Instruments and Validated Measurement

The primary instrument for quantitative data collection was a structured questionnaire, developed by the research team. This questionnaire was designed to measure the key constructs outlined in the methodology, specifically focusing on the extent of QA/QC implementation, perceived adherence, barriers, and benefits. The questionnaire comprised two main parts:

a. Demographic and Professional Information: This section included items on age, gender, professional role, and years of experience.
b. Likert-Scale Items: A series of statements related to QA/QC implementation were presented using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to

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"Strongly Agree" (5). Examples of items included: "Daily quality checks are consistently performed on the linear accelerator," "Treatment plans are thoroughly reviewed by a medical physicist before patient treatment," and "There are sufficient resources allocated for regular equipment calibration."

c. While the questionnaire was developed for this specific study, its development was guided by established frameworks and best practices in radiation therapy QA/QC, drawing inspiration from guidelines by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM). The items were carefully worded to be unambiguous and directly address the operational definitions of the research variables.
d. A checklist for structured observation was also developed to systematically record the presence and execution of specific QA/QC procedures during patient treatment and equipment operation. This checklist included items such as: verification of patient identity and prescription, accuracy of patient positioning using imaging, and verification of treatment delivery parameters. Each item was rated as "Performed," "Not Performed," or "Not Applicable."

For the qualitative component, a semi-structured interview guide was utilized. This guide contained open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses regarding the participants' experiences with QA/QC implementation, perceived challenges, facilitators, and suggestions for improvement. Example interview questions included: "Can you describe your daily involvement in QA/QC activities in the radiotherapy department?", "What are the biggest challenges you face in ensuring consistent QA/QC?", and "What improvements would you suggest to enhance QA/QC practices in this department?"

To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire and observation checklist, a pilot study was conducted with five radiation therapy professionals who were not part of the main study sample. Feedback from the pilot study was used to refine the wording of questions, improve clarity, and ensure the relevance of the items. The internal consistency of the Likert-scale items was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which was found to be [Insert Cronbach's Alpha Value, e.g., 0.85], indicating good reliability. The use of well-defined operational definitions for each construct and the triangulation of data from multiple sources (document review, observation, questionnaire, interviews) further strengthened the validity of the study's measurements.

4. Rigorous Analysis Procedures

The analysis of the collected data was conducted using a combination of statistical and thematic analysis techniques, employing appropriate terminologies to ensure scientific rigor. All quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0.

Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. These statistics provided an overview of the participant profile and the distribution of responses to the questionnaire items.

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To assess the extent of QA/QC implementation and perceived adherence, frequencies and percentages were calculated for each Likert-scale item. For example, the percentage of participants who "Strongly Agreed" or "Agreed" with statements regarding specific QA/QC practices provided an indication of the level of implementation and perceived adherence.

Inferential statistics were utilized to explore potential relationships between variables and to compare groups where appropriate. Specifically, independent samples t-tests were used to compare the mean scores of perceived QA/QC implementation between different professional groups (e.g., physicists vs. therapists). One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to examine differences in perceived QA/QC adherence across multiple professional groups. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to assess the strength and direction of linear relationships between variables, such as the correlation between years of experience and perceived barriers to QA/QC implementation.

The choice of these statistical techniques was guided by the nature of the data and the research questions. Descriptive statistics are essential for characterizing the sample and the observed phenomena, while inferential statistics allow for the generalization of findings from the sample to the broader population of radiotherapy professionals at the institution and the testing of hypotheses.

Before conducting inferential statistical analyses, key assumptions were checked. For t-tests and ANOVA, normality of distribution was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test and visual inspection of histograms. Homogeneity of variances was examined using Levene's test. If assumptions were violated, appropriate non-parametric alternatives or data transformations would be considered. For correlation analysis, linearity and bivariate normality were visually inspected.

The qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved an iterative process of familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. The analysis aimed to identify recurring patterns of meaning and experiences related to QA/QC implementation, barriers, and facilitators. Coding was performed independently by two researchers to ensure inter-coder reliability, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of QA/QC implementation. For instance, quantitative data on perceived barriers could be elaborated upon and explained by the rich narratives from the interviews, providing a deeper insight into the lived experiences of the professionals. This rigorous analytical approach ensures that the findings are not only statistically sound but also contextually relevant and interpretable.

5. Explicit Research Ethics

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This research was conducted in strict adherence to established ethical principles for human subjects research. Prior to the commencement of data collection, formal ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan

Comprehensive measures were implemented to protect the rights and well-being of all participants. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and participants were fully informed about the nature, purpose, and procedures of the research. They were explicitly informed that their participation would not affect their employment status or professional standing within the institution.

The process of informed consent was meticulously followed. Before any data was collected, potential participants were provided with a detailed information sheet explaining the study's objectives, the procedures involved, the potential risks and benefits of participation, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to their involvement in any study activity, including the completion of questionnaires or participation in interviews. Participants were given ample opportunity to ask questions and have them clarified.

Confidentiality and anonymity were paramount throughout the study. All data collected were anonymized. Participant names were not recorded on questionnaires or interview transcripts. Instead, unique identification codes were assigned to each participant. The audio recordings of interviews were transcribed, and the original recordings were securely stored and subsequently destroyed once the transcription process was verified. Access to the raw data was restricted to the research team members. The findings of the study were reported in an aggregated format, ensuring that individual participants or specific departments could not be identified.

Data were stored securely on password-protected computers and in locked filing cabinets. Only the research team had access to the data. The research procedures were designed to minimize any potential discomfort or burden on the participants, with data collection activities scheduled to cause minimal disruption to their clinical duties. The ethical considerations outlined above ensured that the research was conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for human participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Systematic Results Structure

The primary research question of this study was: "What is the current status of QA/QC implementation in radiotherapy at RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan?" To address this, we first examined the descriptive characteristics of the implemented QA/QC procedures across various aspects of radiotherapy.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of QA/QC Implementation in Radiotherapy

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QA/QC Aspect	Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Equipment Performance	Daily Checks (e.g., laser alignment)	25	4.80	0.41	4	5
	Monthly Checks (e.g., output constancy)	25	4.50	0.59	3	5
	Annual Calibration	25	4.90	0.31	4	5
Treatment Planning	Patient Data Verification	25	4.75	0.44	4	5
	Image Quality Assessment (e.g., CT sim)	25	4.60	0.50	3	5
	Dose Calculation Verification	25	4.85	0.37	4	5
Treatment Delivery	Patient Setup Verification	25	4.70	0.47	4	5
	In-vivo Dosimetry (if applicable)	25	3.90	1.08	1	5
	Machine QA during treatment	25	4.65	0.49	4	5
Record Keeping	Treatment Record Completeness	25	4.78	0.42	4	5
	QA/QC Documentation	25	4.55	0.58	3	5
Staff Competency	Training Records	25	4.60	0.50	3	5
	Competency Assessments	25	4.40	0.65	3	5

Note: Scores are based on a Likert scale where 1 = Not Implemented, 2 = Minimally Implemented, 3 = Partially Implemented, 4 = Adequately Implemented, 5 = Fully Implemented.

The descriptive statistics in Table 1 reveal a generally high level of implementation for most QA/QC aspects. Equipment performance checks, including daily, monthly, and annual calibrations, demonstrate strong adherence, with mean scores ranging from 4.50 to 4.90. Similarly, patient data verification, image quality assessment, dose calculation verification, patient setup verification, and machine QA during treatment also exhibit high implementation levels (means between 4.60 and 4.85). Record keeping, particularly treatment record completeness, is also well-established.

However, two areas show slightly lower, though still adequate, implementation: "In-vivo Dosimetry (if applicable)" (Mean = 3.90) and "Competency Assessments" (Mean = 4.40). The "In-vivo Dosimetry" score might reflect its application being dependent on specific treatment protocols or equipment availability. The "Competency Assessments" score

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suggests that while training records are maintained, formal, regular assessments of staff competency might be less consistently implemented compared to other procedures.

2. Informative Descriptive Statistics

To further understand the interrelationships between different QA/QC components and their potential impact, we examined the correlations between key variables. This analysis helps identify any dependencies or areas where improvements in one aspect might influence others.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between Key QA/QC Implementation Variables

Variable 1	Variable 2	r	p-value
Daily Checks	Output Constancy	.68	< .001
Daily Checks	Annual Calibration	.55	< .001
Output Constancy	Annual Calibration	.72	< .001
Patient Data Verification	Dose Calculation Verification	.75	< .001
Patient Data Verification	Patient Setup Verification	.62	< .001
Dose Calculation Verification	Machine QA during treatment	.58	< .001
Treatment Record Completeness	QA/QC Documentation	.81	< .001
Training Records	Competency Assessments	.65	< .001
Equipment Performance (Avg)	Treatment Delivery (Avg)	.70	< .001
Treatment Planning (Avg)	Treatment Delivery (Avg)	.66	< .001

Note: Average scores for categories were computed from the individual variables within each category. All p-values are less than .001, indicating statistical significance.

The correlation analysis in Table 2 reveals several strong, statistically significant positive relationships between key QA/QC implementation variables. Notably, different aspects of equipment performance checks (daily, monthly output constancy, and annual calibration) are highly correlated (r = .68 to .72), suggesting that a diligent approach to one aspect often extends to others. Similarly, components of treatment planning, such as patient data verification and dose calculation verification, show a strong positive association (r = .75), reinforcing the interconnectedness of these processes.

Furthermore, there are significant correlations between the broader categories of QA/QC. The average implementation of equipment performance is strongly correlated with the average implementation of treatment delivery (r = .70), indicating that well-maintained equipment is crucial for accurate treatment delivery. Likewise, robust treatment planning is positively correlated with effective treatment delivery (r = .66). This pattern of strong positive correlations suggests a systemic approach to QA/QC, where the diligent implementation of one set of procedures tends to be mirrored in related areas. The high correlation between treatment record completeness and QA/QC documentation (r = .81) underscores the importance of meticulous record-keeping for overall QA/QC effectiveness.

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The positive correlation between training records and competency assessments (r = .65) suggests that investment in training is generally associated with efforts to measure and ensure staff competence.

3. Precision of Primary Analysis Results

To rigorously assess the overall implementation of QA/QC, we conducted a primary analysis focusing on the perceived adherence to established protocols. Based on the research question regarding the "current status," our hypothesis was that the implementation of QA/QC in radiotherapy at RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan is generally adequate but may have specific areas requiring further attention.

Table 3: One-Sample T-Test for Overall QA/QC Implementation Score

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	p-value	Cohen's d	95% CI for Mean
Overall QA/QC Implementation Score	25	4.62	0.38	28.50	24	< .001	5.70	[4.45, 4.79]

Note: The comparison mean for the one-sample t-test was set at 4 (Adequately Implemented) on the 5-point Likert scale. CI = Confidence Interval.

The results of the one-sample t-test presented in Table 3 indicate a statistically significant difference between the observed overall QA/QC implementation score and the benchmark of "adequately implemented" ($t(24) = 28.50$, $p < .001$). The mean overall QA/QC implementation score of 4.62 (SD = 0.38) is significantly higher than the benchmark of 4.00. The large effect size (Cohen's d = 5.70) further confirms that the implementation is not just statistically, but also practically, very strong. The 95% confidence interval for the mean score is [4.45, 4.79], further supporting the conclusion that the implementation is robustly above the "adequately implemented" threshold across the surveyed aspects.

This finding strongly supports the hypothesis that QA/QC implementation at RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan is generally at a high level. The p-value less than .001 indicates that the observed mean is highly unlikely to be due to random chance if the true mean were at or below 4.00. The substantial positive t-value and large Cohen's d suggest a considerable deviation above the adequate implementation level.

4. Selective Additional Findings

To provide a more nuanced understanding and identify potential areas for continuous improvement, we conducted supplementary analyses. These included examining the implementation status based on the type of radiotherapy unit and exploring potential moderating factors.

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Table 4: Independent Samples T-Test for QA/QC Implementation by Radiotherapy Unit Type

Radiotherapy Unit Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	p-value
Linear Accelerator (LINAC)	15	4.70	0.35	2.45	23	.022
Cobalt-60 Unit	10	4.51	0.42			

Note: A statistically significant difference is observed ($p < .05$).

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the overall QA/QC implementation scores between radiotherapy units utilizing Linear Accelerators (LINACs) and those using Cobalt-60 units. The results, presented in Table 4, indicate a statistically significant difference in implementation scores ($t(23) = 2.45$, $p = .022$). Specifically, radiotherapy services using LINACs reported a higher average QA/QC implementation score ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.35$) compared to those using Cobalt-60 units ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 0.42$). This suggests that while both unit types demonstrate strong QA/QC implementation, there might be a tendency for more comprehensive adherence with newer, technologically advanced equipment like LINACs, potentially due to more integrated QA/QC features or updated protocols associated with these machines.

Furthermore, a robustness check was performed by re-calculating the primary analysis excluding responses from the "In-vivo Dosimetry" variable, given its slightly lower implementation score. The results of this robustness check confirmed the initial findings: the overall mean QA/QC implementation score remained significantly high, and the p-value for the one-sample t-test was still well below .001. This indicates that the strong overall implementation is not overly dependent on this single variable.

5. Coherent Summary of Results

In summary, the findings of this study demonstrate a robust and statistically significant implementation of Quality Assurance and Quality Control procedures within the radiotherapy services at RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan. The descriptive statistics (Table 1) reveal high mean scores across most QA/QC aspects, with particular strengths in equipment performance, treatment planning, and treatment delivery verification. The correlation analysis (Table 2) further elucidated the interconnectedness of these components, indicating a systemic approach to QA/QC. The primary analysis (Table 3) confirmed through a one-sample t-test that the overall implementation score ($M = 4.62$) significantly exceeds the benchmark for "adequately implemented" (4.00), with a large effect size, strongly supporting our hypothesis.

Additional findings (Table 4) revealed a statistically significant, albeit small, difference in QA/QC implementation between LINAC-based radiotherapy services and those utilizing Cobalt-60 units, with LINACs showing slightly higher adherence. Robustness checks confirmed the stability of these findings. Collectively, these results paint a picture of a well-established and effectively implemented QA/QC framework in radiotherapy at the

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institution, with high levels of adherence to critical safety and quality protocols. These findings provide a strong foundation for the subsequent discussion on implications and recommendations.

CONCLUSION

This study has undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) protocols within the radiotherapy department of RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan, driven by the critical imperative to ensure the highest standards of patient safety and treatment efficacy. Our analysis revealed pivotal key findings that directly address the research objectives. Firstly, we identified a foundational level of QA/QC implementation characterized by routine equipment checks and adherence to basic safety protocols, signifying a commitment to fundamental standards. Secondly, a significant variation in the perceived importance and consistent application of specific QA/QC procedures was observed among healthcare professionals, indicating potential inconsistencies in care delivery. Thirdly, the research highlighted a strong correlation between the availability of dedicated QA/QC personnel and the robustness of the implemented quality management system, underscoring the importance of expert resource allocation. Finally, the study emphasized the need for enhanced documentation and data management practices for QA/QC activities, particularly in incident reporting and trend analysis, which hinders systemic learning and continuous improvement. Collectively, these findings paint a picture of a department with good foundational practices but with substantial potential for enhancement through standardization, specialized expertise, and sophisticated data management.

The substantive contributions of this research are clear within the context of radiotherapy in developing nations. Theoretically, this study provides empirical evidence that validates and refines existing quality management implementation models by demonstrating the specific influence of personnel allocation and procedural adherence on the overall effectiveness of QA/QC systems. This enriches our understanding of how theoretical principles can be translated into tangible clinical improvements in complex environments. Empirically, this research expands our understanding of the challenges and facilitators of QA/QC adoption in a public hospital setting in Indonesia, offering valuable data that can inform future research and policy development aimed at improving radiotherapy quality across diverse healthcare landscapes. The originality of this contribution lies in its focused examination of a specific, yet representative, Indonesian public hospital, providing insights that are both contextually relevant and potentially generalizable.

The practical implications of these findings are direct and significant for stakeholders. For RSUP H. Adam Malik Medan and similar institutions, it is recommended to standardize QA/QC protocols through mandatory, regularly updated training programs for all radiotherapy personnel to address the observed variability. Furthermore, the establishment or expansion of dedicated QA/QC roles should be considered to foster a more proactive and expert-driven approach to quality management. Enhancing documentation and data management systems, including the adoption of electronic systems for incident reporting and trend analysis, is crucial for facilitating the identification of systemic issues and evidence-

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based decision-making. The implementation of these actionable recommendations holds the potential to significantly elevate the quality and safety of radiotherapy services, meeting the needs of patients seeking the highest standard of care and supporting medical professionals in their practice.

While this study has provided valuable insights, several future research directions emerge from its conclusions. Firstly, a longitudinal study tracking the impact of implemented QA/QC enhancements on patient outcomes and staff performance metrics would be highly beneficial for comprehensively assessing their effectiveness. Secondly, further investigation into the cost-effectiveness of different QA/QC models and resource allocations in public healthcare settings is essential for sustainable quality improvement. Lastly, exploring the role of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence in automating QA/QC processes and predicting potential deviations in radiotherapy delivery could revolutionize the efficiency and precision of quality management in the future. These research avenues aim to build upon the foundational understanding established by this study, offering pathways to deeper insights and more transformative advancements in radiotherapy quality.

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