



Title	Radiotherapy for Cancer
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Aim

In 1996, SBU published a scientific review of radiotherapy for cancer. This review of the recent scientific literature updates the 1996 report.

Results and conclusions

- Treatment of cancer patients includes surgery, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy, all of which are part of the concept of oncology treatment.
- In Sweden, radiotherapy for solid tumors is practiced in general agreement with the evidence presented in the scientific literature.
- The role which radiotherapy plays in the curative and palliative treatment of patients with certain types of cancer has been documented. However, the evidence must be substantially strengthened by randomized controlled trials addressing the following issues:
 1. The relative advantages and disadvantages of different types of palliative treatment.
 2. Comparative studies of radiotherapy in relation to other treatment options for certain types of cancer.
 3. Comparative studies of side effects and patients' quality of life from different methods of radiotherapy and other types of treatment.
- More patients must be included in clinical trials to develop and improve the care and treatment of cancer.
- Curative radiotherapy is an important complement to treatment, mainly surgery, for most types of cancer addressed in this report.
- Palliative radiotherapy has increased, which is in line with the projection presented in the previous SBU report.
- The volume and capacity of radiotherapy in Sweden is now largely the same as in other Western nations.
- The direct cost for radiotherapy averages approximately 55 000 SEK for a curative treatment and approximately 17 000 SEK for a corresponding palliative series.
- It is essential to review the structure, organization, and resource utilization of oncology services. The advantages and disadvantages of centralizing treatment resources for patients with unusual types of cancer should be investigated. Such review is essential to assure access to adequately trained staff and the medical outcome of treatment. Staff requirements for cancer radiotherapy are uncertain, and it is essential to study this issue.
- Routines for quality assurance in radiotherapy should be developed and should cover the quality of care and services.
- Future studies on the effects of various treatment options for cancer patients should investigate the impact on the patient's quality of life and wellbeing. Detailed studies of immediate and long-term side effects are needed.

Method

Systematic literature review of scientific studies published during the past 5 to 10 years.

Further research required

See above

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