The management of rectal cancer in Belgium: a survey of our practice


In 1995, a Peer Review Commission Radiotherapy was installed at the initiative of the Belgian Ministry of Health as part of a larger pilot project on quality assurance. This commission was composed of 14 members, 8 radiation oncologists (appointed by the Belgian Association of Radiation Oncology) and 6 physicists (appointed by the Belgian Association of Hospital Physicists). Peer review is only one of the activities within the Quality control of the medical performance aiming to improve quality in diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. Other activities in Quality assurance are development of standards and guidelines, continuous education and measurements of the treatment process. In 1998, the Peer review Commission Radiotherapy has proposed to make a survey of rectal cancer management including diagnostic procedures and therapeutic approaches. More than 1300 questionnaires were sent to the chairman of the 25 Belgian radiotherapy departments, asking them to have it filled in by the radiation oncologist in charge of rectal cancer treatment in their department and to all the known surgeons from a list provided by the Ministry of Health. The paper reports and discuss the results of this survey.