

Neutron radiotherapy: Society comments

To the Editor: The radiation oncology community in South Africa can no longer support the continuation of neutron therapy. The lack of new phase III data to support this treatment modality and the fact that patients numbers never really materialised resulted in very inefficient utilisation of available resources that could have been better spent. Progress in clinical and radiation oncology during the past 20 years with new technologies readily available in this country resulted in even fewer reasons to continue this programme. The logistics involved in trying to utilise this as a national resource – which would be the same if one were to try and argue for this to be used as a resource for the continent of Africa – would result in even less benefit to society as a whole.

South Africa can no longer afford to fund such programmes given the many competing priorities in oncology and health in general. To do so would border on being socially irresponsible.

Samuel Fourie

Chairman of the South African Society of Clinical and Radiation Oncology
sfourie@sasco.org

Raymond Abratt

Michiel Botha

Robbie De Muellenaere

Leon Gouws

Greg Hart

Amo Jordaan

Waldek Szpak

Committee members: South African Society of Clinical and Radiation Oncology