

More radiation therapy PhDs

Spectrum report



Drs Marianne Rinks, left, and Rebecca Owen received their doctorates from the University of Sydney in November 2009

Dr Marianne Rinks

Marianne Rinks graduated from the University of Sydney in November 2009, receiving a Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD). Dr Rinks along with Assoc Prof Jenny Cox and Dr John Atyeo were the foundation lecturers in radiation therapy at the Cumberland College of Health Sciences, now the University of Sydney.

Her research investigated the adoption of 3D radiation therapy planning systems in Australia from the 1990s to mid 2000s. As survey and qualitative research methods were used, Marianne is very grateful to her Australian radiation therapy, radiation oncology and medical physics colleagues who participated at various stages in her research. She also wishes to acknowledge the immense support and mentorship she received from her university supervisors, Dr Alastair Davison and Dr Ann Poulos.

In early 2001, Marianne moved from the university into radiation therapy clinical management, working in both the public and private sectors. In her current role as the Chief Radiation Therapist at Northern Sydney Cancer Centre, Royal North Shore Hospital, Marianne continues to promote and support radiation therapy research. The centre currently has six radiation therapists enrolled in research degrees including one who holds an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) scholarship.

Dr Rebecca Owen

On 27th November, 2009 Rebecca Owen finally walked on the grass in the quadrangle at the University of Sydney. After four years of research on the topic of *Fiducial Markers for Prostate Radiotherapy: the Utility of Different Image Guidance Options*, she was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Medical Radiation Sciences at a ceremony in the Great Hall at the University of Sydney.

The overarching purpose of the research was to compare two image guidance options: CT (in room CT and Cone beam CT) with the more traditional and readily available EPI option, in terms of fiducial marker localisation for prostate cancer.

The research offered many exciting opportunities to work within the urology IGRT multidisciplinary team at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, where one of the goals is to continually assess and improve prostate radiotherapy technique. It also gave her an opportunity to work directly with senior researchers in physics and in radiation oncology, which has proven to be a very rewarding experience. This research has given an in depth understanding of the capabilities of state-of-the-art image guidance options and how accurately they can locate fiducial markers.

During the course of the research, Rebecca held a clinical



Top: Rebecca Owen with Jenny Cox; Bottom: Dr John Ateyo, Dr Marianne Rinks and Assoc Prof Jenny Cox

research radiation therapist position at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. She also secured competitive grant funding to progress different aspects of the research.

Various experiments conducted for the degree were presented internationally which gave her the opportunity to squeeze in a fun family holiday (or two). Her research has also resulted in numerous publications, two of which are in the *International Journal of Radiation Oncology Biology Physics*.

The AIR congratulates Marianne Rinks and Rebecca Owen on their wonderful achievements and wishes them well in their careers.

Rural Clinical Placement Scheme



The Rural and Remote Practitioners Advisory Board (RRPAB) of the AIR annually offers six grants of \$500 through the Rural Clinical Placement Scheme. The scheme was introduced to integrate with the AIR's ongoing efforts to support and promote rural health initiatives.

Grants are available for student members of the AIR who are currently enrolled in a full time capacity in an AIR accredited course in medical imaging or radiation therapy at an Australian University. The grants aim to assist student members who are undertaking clinical placements in a rural setting with the associated increase in costs such as travel and accommodation.

Only one application for a grant was received in 2009 and the RRPAB was pleased to award a grant to Phillipa Bottrell from RMIT University who undertook her 3rd year clinical placement at Warrnambool Hospital.

Contact me by email at standards@air.asn.au if you would like further information regarding the Rural Clinical Placement Scheme.

Lori McLeod
Professional Standards Manager

Final chance to make submissions to the 2010 World Congress 9th–12th September 2010 Gold Coast

Members are reminded that the closing date for Submission of abstracts for the conference is 28th February 2010. If you want to make a presentation at the congress get your submission in. This is a wonderful opportunity to present and to hear from, and be heard by, members of the profession from around the world.

Obituary

Virginia Miller

Virginia Miller (née Potter), was born on September 14th 1956, in Sydney. After matriculating from Canberra Church of England Girls' Grammar, she began a radiography cadetship at John James Private hospital in Canberra, completing her Diploma of Medical Science (Radiography) through the Royal Melbourne Institute in 1978.

She moved to Bega shortly after, marrying Raymond Miller, and having four children – Rachel, Rebecca, Jonathon and Sara.

Virginia began working at Bega District Hospital on 29th of March 1987. Being a mother, wife, farmer and part-time radiographer was obviously not keeping her busy enough, so she began studying for her Bachelor of Applied Science (Medical Imaging) through Charles Stuart University in 1994, graduating in 1997.

When student radiographers did placements at Bega Hospital X-ray Department they were always told that Virginia was the staff member to try to emulate and from whom they would learn the correct way of taking a radiograph. To say she was exceptional in her attention to detail is almost an understatement.

She continued to work at BDH until 2008, when ill health caused her to take a leave of absence from her 'second home'. Virginia stoically braved over a decade of medical issues to finally find rest on 22nd September 2009, at home surrounded by her loving family. She is missed greatly by family, friends, work colleagues and patients alike, all of whom recognised her as 'a beautiful soul and a very special lady'.