Update on proton therapy research at the University of Texas, M. D. Anderson Cancer Center

Uwe Titt

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Uwe Titt (Monte Carlo guy)

#### THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MDAnderson Cancer Center

Making Cancer History<sup>®</sup>



#### **Global Map of Sister Institutions**



#### MDACC

#### **Divisional Structure**

The Division of Radiation Oncology comprises the Departments of Radiation Oncology, Radiation Physics, and Experimental Radiation Oncology.

Division of Radiation Oncology					
	Division HeadBruce Minsky, M.D. Division Head <i>ad interim</i> Deputy Division Head and Clinical Research DirectorBruce Minsky, M.D. Executive Director and Division AdministratorRobin Famiglietti, M.B.A., F.A.C.H.E., Ph.D.				
		Department of Radiation Oncology Chair: Bruce Minsky, M.D., <i>ad interim</i> Employees: 513		<b>Department of</b> <b>Radiation Physics</b> Chair: Geoffrey Ibbott, Ph.D. Employees: 211	Department of Experimental Radiation Oncology Chair: Junjie Chen, Ph.D. Employees: 130

#### MDACC

#### **Divisional Structure**

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#### **KEY COMPONENTS**

The Department of Radiation Physics provides research-driven, safe, accurate and high-quality patient care in collaboration with radiation oncologists. Faculty members in Radiation Physics conduct research and drive technology development to advance the delivery of radiation therapy. In conjunction with The University of Texas Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, the department provides master's and Ph.D. degrees in medical physics. The Radiation Oncology Medical Physics Residency Program is a two-year clinical training program for medical physicists.

Radiation Physics is home to the National Cancer Institute-funded Radiological Physics Center. The center supports clinical trials and cooperative research groups to ensure that institutions participating in clinical trials deliver prescribed radiation doses that are clinically comparable and consistent.

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#### THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MDAnderson Cancer Center® Proton Therapy





## Hitachi Synchrotron



### Hitachi Synchrotron - Characteristics

- 7 Mev horizontal multi-turn injection
- Rotating freq. = 1.6-8 MHz
- 70 250 MeV extraction energy
- 0.4 MeV resolution
- 2 6.7 sec/cycle
- 0.5 5 sec/spill
- > 8 x 10<sup>10</sup> p/pulse
- 2 Gy/min for 14x14x16 cc
- Pulse to pulse energy change



#### Research

## Overview – Proton Therapy

- There are two ways of delivering proton therapy
  - With passive scattering (PSPT)
  - With scanned narrow beamlets) whose intensities are optimally adjusted to produce intensity-modulated proton therapy (IMPT)
- In principle, proton therapy has significantly greater therapeutic potential
  - IMPT has even greater potential

**Overview - Challenges** 

- There are numerous unresolved problems and gaps in our knowledge that could limit the exploitation of the full potential of PT
  - Protons are more vulnerable uncertainties
  - Examples of uncertainties:
    - Inter- and intra-fractional anatomic variations
    - Dosimetric
      - Approximations in dose computation algorithms
      - CT data
      - CT to stopping power ratio conversion
    - Biological

#### **Overview - Challenges**

- Dose distributions seen on treatment plans may be significantly different from what the patient gets
  - (Robustness of treatment plans uncertain)
  - IMPT is even more vulnerable to uncertainties
- Distal edge of proton beams may be degraded significantly by heterogeneities

- Optimization systems insufficiently advanced
  - Quality is not as high as it can be

## Overview – Research Opportunities

 Knowledge gaps to be filled and problems to be solved present opportunities for research

- Examples
  - Studies of the impact of and reduction in intra- and inter-fractional uncertainties
  - Incorporation of uncertainties in plan optimization (robust optimization)
  - Improving dose computation accuracy

## Overview – Research Opportunities

• More examples

- Optimization PSPT
  - Beam directions
  - Compensators
- Optimization IMPT beyond intensities
  - Beam parameters angles, spot positions, ...
  - Robust optimization
- Robustness quantification
- Biology

# NCI-Funded Joint Program Project Grant (MGH and MDACC)

Improving the Clinical Effectiveness and Understanding of the Biophysical Basis of Proton Therapy

- Project 1: Assessment of Effectiveness of IMPT vs. IMRT through Phase II Randomized Clinical Trials
- Project 2: Exploratory Phase I/II Clinical Studies to Improve the Therapeutic Ratio of Proton Radiation Therapy
- Project 3: Assessing and understanding the impact of physical and biological factors on outcomes of proton therapy
- Project 4: Improving Outcomes by Optimally Exploiting Physical and Biological Characteristics of Protons

#### Christopher Peeler:

- Application of Monte Carlo dose calculation techniques for studies of proton relative biological effectiveness
- Analysis of retrospective data to determine correlations between proton dose and LET and imaged outcomes
- Development of models to describe in vivo biological effects of protons
- Analysis of outcomes data with respect to traditional linear-quadratic models of proton relative biological effectiveness



(A) Physical dose, (B) track-averaged LET, and (C) probability of image change for an example patient case



A generalized linear model which describes probability of normal tissue image changes in brain as a function of proton dose and LET.

# Fada Guan & Lawrence Bronk: Spatial Mapping of the Biological Effectiveness of Scanned Proton Beams



#### **12 columns**



Solution: RPMI 1640 medium

96-well plate

High-throughput Cell Culture

### Cell Irradiation





#### Dose Map in the 96-Well Plate (from MC)



#### Darshana Patel & Lawrence Bronk:

#### Relative Biological Effectiveness (RBE) of Heavy Ion Beams









## Dragan Mirkovic:

• Lung Heterogeneity correction for protons

- Analysis of patient outcomes:
  - Lung toxicities vs. doses delivered
  - Lung recurrences vs. doses delivered
  - Brain imaging changes in proton therapy patients
  - Head and neck toxicities vs. doses delivered

## Lung heterogeneity correction

- Current CT based models use volume averaging and replace highly heterogeneous lung tissue with a homogeneous model
- This can have adverse effects on dose calculation in lung



- Microscopic model possible?
  - Correctly models microscopic structure of lung tissue
  - 2 mm<sup>3</sup> volumes of the lung tissue parameterized by density
  - Microscopic structure of the lung approximated with a grid of truncated octahedra

#### Zayne Belal:

# Heterogeneity correction for proton beams in lung tissue

•Compare proton transport through homogeneous and heterogeneous lung tissue using TOPAS. Goal is to develop a heterogeneity correction factor that can be used to resolve issues with volume averaged CT of lung tissue.

•Picture: Heterogeneous lung phantom with alveolar-like sacs (red), phasespace (purple)



•Commission a model of a Passive Scattering Proton therapy (PSPT) treatment head developed MCNPX. Goal is to create a dose approximation model that recreates the dose measured during quality assurance.

Ryosuke Kono:

# Evaluation of Potential Impact of RBE Variations in IMPT Planning

- IMPT planning study for brain tumors
- Evaluation of potential impact of RBE variations (using FDC)
- Analysis of the effects of the number and the directions of proton beams in IMPT planning
- Goal: find optimal beam arrangement in clinical applications of a variable RBE for IMPT planning.

Amy Liu: Comparing normal tissue irradiated volumes for proton vs. photon treatment plans on PO1 lung patients

**Purpose**: The aim of this work is to compare the "irradiated volume" (IRV) of normal tissues receiving 1, 5, 20, 50, 80 and 90% or higher of the prescription dose with passively scattered proton therapy (PSPT) vs. IMRT of lung cancer patients. The overall goal of this research is to understand the factors affecting outcomes of a randomized PSPT vs. IMRT lung trial.


GTV CT number, volume and mass changes with IMRT vs. passively scattered proton therapy (PSPT) for locally advanced NSCLC patients

**Purpose:** To investigate and compare changes in CT number (CTN), volume and mass of gross tumor volume (GTV) derived from the weekly CTs for NSCLC patients on an IMRT vs. PSPT randomized trial.



## Laurence Court: Radiomics features change during radiation TX

• These summarize the delta radiomics work we did. No difference between protons and photons found.

#### Radiomics features change during radiation TX

- Used a wilcox sign rank test to compare patients radiomics values during treatment to their values at the beginning of treatment.
- P-values were corrected using Bonferroni method
- Changes in radiomics features are significant as early as 10-15 fractions (after 20-30 Gy has been delivered)
- Feature changes were not impacted by treatment group (Proton versus IMRT)



# Univariate and multivariate models using radiomics features

- Univariate Results (in figure)
  - Overall Survival: net changes were most prognostic
  - Distant Metastases: pre-TX values are most prognostic
  - Local Recurrence: end of TX values were most prognostic

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- Multivariate Results:
  - Overall Survival & Distant Mets: only clinical factors and one pre-TX feature were prognostic
  - Local Recurrence: only one er of TX feature was prognostic.



## Gabriel Sawakuchi: Basic and translational radiobiology

#### **Research Focus/Funded Projects:**

- DNA damage response induced by particle beams
- Gold nanoparticle sensitization (chemo/radiation)
- Dosimetry in the presence of magnetic fields

Our lab works in the interface of physics, instrument development and biology.

## Live cell imaging in therapeutic beam lines

- Designed and constructed a portable open frame confocal microscope
- Flexible configuration
- Can be shipped to any place
- Can be used in any beam line
  - horizontal beams
  - vertical beams

## Live cell imaging in therapeutic beam lines



Live neurons from rats imaged for 30 min after xray exposure Single strand break DNA damage from 60 MeV protons







## Nanoscale radiation measurements in live cells

- Fluorescence nuclear track detectors (FNTDs) (Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>:C,Mg)
- Can be read out using confocal microscopy
- 3D reconstruction of tracks
- Resolution limited by diffraction (~ 300 nm)
- Can be cut into coverslips
- Biocompatible!



Protons, ~65 MeV, ~1 keV/ $\mu$ m in H<sub>2</sub>O



Sawakuchi et al 2016, Med. Phys. 43, 2485

# Nanoscale radiation measurements in live cells





## Gold-nanoparticles sensitization

- What are the causes of gold-nanoparticle sensitization?
  - Monte Carlo simulations to understand physical mechanisms
  - Lice cell experiments to understand biological mechanisms

Fibrosarcoma cells treated with goldnanoshells. Blue: nucleus; green: cytoplasm; and white: gold-nanoshells.



## Dosimetry in the presence of magnetic fields

- Develop and validate formalism to calibrate MRI-guided radiotherapy units
  - B-field affects the response of ionization chambers that are used to calibrate radiotherapy units
  - Use Monte Carlo and measurements to determine correction factors to use ionization chambers in B-fields

#### Reference dosimetry in magnetic fields: formalism and ionization chamber correction factors

D. J. O'Brien<sup>a)</sup> Department of Radiation Physics, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas 77030

D. A. Roberts Elekta Limited, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 9RR, United Kingdom

G. S. Ibbott Department of Radiation Physics, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas 77030

G. O. Sewakuch<sup>(0)</sup> Department of Radiation Physics, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas 77030 and Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, The University of Texas, Houston, Texas 77030 Detailed models of ionization chambers implemented in the Monte Carlo code Geant4. These models are used to study how B-fields affect the response of the chambers.



O'Brien et al 2016, Med. Phys. 43, 4915

## My current clinical research

## 5d Doses (Monte Carlo simulations)

Goal: Compute the best representation of cumulative Biologically-Effective Dose Distribution actually delivered

Or: Compare Eclipse 3d lung cancer treatment dose distributions with MC 5d (weekly repeat 4d)

And: Assess the differences

## **Current Status**

- 3 patients fully computed
  - Analysis in progress
- 2 more in progress
  - Computations underway
- 2 more prepared for MC sims

## Patient 1

- RLL Lung case
- Treated in 2010 with PSPT
- 74 Gy CGE in 37 fx

## Validation

MC<sup>2</sup>



## Validation

MC<sup>2</sup>



## Validation

MC<sup>2</sup>



## Importing 5d doses...

MC<sup>2</sup>



## Importing 5d doses...

MC<sup>2</sup>



#### DVHs: heart, cord, esoph., contr. lung



## DVHs: ipsilateral lung



#### DVHs: PTV



#### DVHs: CTV



## DVHs: CTV



## Patient 2

- Right upper recurrent lung tumor
- Treated in 2010 with PSPT
- 74 Gy CGE in 37 fx

#### DVHs



## DVHs Esophagus



## DVHs PTV



## DVHs CTV



## DVHs CTV



## ECLIPSE PTV and 100% line



## MC avg. PTV and 100% line



## MC 5d PTV and 100% line


## What did we learn?

- DVHs show the expected differences between ECLIPSE doses and MC (avg) doses
  - Low dose regions enhanced
  - High dose regions slightly reduced
- Comparing both to the doses from the 5d computations show larger differences in PTV
- CTV shows small deviations from predictions
- Needs to be investigated further!
- Achtung! So far we used an RBE of 1.1 only !!!

#### Jinzhong Yang: A Fully Automated 5D Dose Accumulation Tool



## MC cpu time requirements

- Example:
  - 1 patient
  - 3 beams
  - Each beam 33 runs
  - Each run on 64 cpus needs (n+1) hours
  - n = 1, ..., 23
- That's a lot of computing...

# High Performance Computing

- Institutional cluster
  - Nautilus (>8000 cpus, my "reservation": 2300)
  - Shark (~1800 cpus)
  - Eagle (?? Cpus)
- Departmental cluster
  - Martin2
  - >2500 cpus

## My current (not so clinical ???) research

### The Proton-Expansion-Project

- New HITACHI proton facility
- 4 rotational gantries
- All scanning beam

## The Proton-Expansion-Project

- My interest:
  - Radiation Protection
    - Members of the public: 5 mSv / y and 0.02 mSv in any one hour
    - Occupational: 50 mSv / y
  - Facility Features
    - Straight doors / no mazes
    - Straight conduits
    - Alignment holes

## The Proton-Expansion-Project

- Monte Carlo
  - Model
  - Simulations

- Evaluation of shielding
  - Estimate Facility usage
  - Estimate Fluence
  - Conversion of Fluence to Ambient Dose Equivalent
  - Results

#### Monte Carlo Model



161 sources (1 injector and 40 locations at 4 Energies)

Each run with 5x10<sup>8</sup> protons (runtime ~ 60 hours +)

## Estimate Facility Usage

				#of protons/year															
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source #	descript	ion	E/MeV	clinical 1 coord - 10	commissioning	MEE operation				L 7 As	#######	protons							
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18	ISO	0 deg	230	1.030E+15	6.816E+15	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14		Sa2	Acc Mags	128	uC/3M	each	<50 MeV			0.74	59 uC/h
19	ISO	90 deg	230	1.030E+15	6.741E+15	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14		Sa3	Scraper	1548	uC/3M		<50 MeV		5998	9.0	21 uC/h
20	ISO	180 deg	230	1.030E+15	9.738E+14	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14		Sa4	Extraction	79	uC/3M		230 MeV		5997	0.46	04 uC/h
21	ISO	270 deg	230	1.030E+15	1.074E+15	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14		Sh1	FCC	106	uC/3M		230 MeV		5996	0.61	77 uC/h
22	ISO	Odeg	230	1.030E+15	6.816E+15	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14			damper						5995		
23	ISO	90 deg	230	1.030E+15	6.741E+15	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14			ISOs –	273	uC/3M			1	Ddeg	1.590	09 uC/h
24	ISO	180 deg	230	1.030E+15	9.738E+14	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14				270	uC/3M			:	30 deg	1.57	34 uC/h
25	ISO	270 deg	230	1.030E+15	1.074E+15	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14				39	uC/3M				180 deg	0.22	73 uC/h
26	ISO	0 deg	230	1.030E+15	6.816E+15	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14				43	uC/3M			;	270 deg	0.250	06 uC/h
27	liso	90 deg	230	1.030E+15	6.741E+15	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14											
28	liso	180 deg	230	1.030E+15	9.738E+14	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14		MEE op	eration								
29	ISO	270 deg	230	1.030E+15	1.074E+15	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14		Sa1	injector	495	uC/3M		7 MeV		5999	2.88	16 uC/h
30	liso	Odeg	230	1.030E+15	6.816E+15	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14		Sa2		45	uC/3M		230 MeV			0.267	22 uC/h
31	1150	90 deg	230	1.030E+15	6.741E+15	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14				90	uC73M		200 MeV			0.52	45 uC/h
32	150	180 deg	230	1.030E+15	9.738E+14	2.497E+14	5.306E+14	2.497E+14				45	uC73M		T/UMeV			0.262	22 uC/h 21 uC/h
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										Sh1	FCC	10	UC/3M		230 May		5996	0.05	
										on		19	uC/3M		230 MeV		3330	0.11	17 uC/h
												10	uC/3M		230 MeV			0.05	33 uC/b
											damper	17	uC/3M		230 MeV		5995	0.09	91 uC/h
											aanper	34	uC/3M		230 MeV		0000	0.00	81 uC/h
												17	uC/3M		230 MeV			0.09	91 uC/h
											ISOs	10	uC/3M		230 MeV			0.05	33 uC/h
												2125	uC/3M		200 MeV			0.12	38 uC/h
										-		the second se			2001-00-0				

#### Estimate Fluence



## Estimate Fluence



#### Fluence to Dose conversion (ICRP 116)



### Results



Members of the public: **5 mSv / y** and **0.02 mSv** in any one hour

Occupational: 50 mSv / y

#### Now the fun stuff...

# **Ions Heavier Than Protons**

- Helium, Lithium, Beryllium, Boron, Carbon
- Exciting new area of research and development
- Long term goal: Establish and heavy ion facility at MDACC

# Physical and Biological Aspects

- Heavier ions have superior dose distribution characteristics (less lateral scattering)
- The higher ionization density along their tracks leads to greater biological effectiveness and the ability to overcome radiation resistance of cancer stem cells and hypoxic tumors

# Immunogenic and Clinical Aspects

- Heavier ions can induce immunogenic response (e.g., release of tumor antigens, especially at high doses per fraction)
  - Augment radiotherapy's local capabilities with systemic potential to treat regional microscopic and distant metastatic disease (the "abscopal" effect)
- High curative potential, especially in combination with immunomodulatory drugs

#### **CLINICAL FACULTY**

Michalis Aristophanous, Ph.D. Peter A. Balter, Ph.D. Sam Beddar, Ph.D. Tina Briere, Ph.D. Laurence E. Court, Ph.D. Pai-Chun Chi, Ph.D. Gabriel Sawakuchi, Ph.D Richard Castillo, Ph.D. Weiliang Du, Ph.D. David Followill, Ph.D. Kent Gifford, Ph.D. Song Gao, Ph.D. Michael Gillin, Ph.D. Rebecca Howell, Ph.D. Yoshifumi Hojo, Ph.D. Geoffrey Ibbott, Ph.D. Stephen Kry, Ph.D. Rajat Kudchadker, Ph.D. Heng Li, Ph.D. Dershan Luo, Ph.D. Mary Martel, Ph.D. Adam David Melancon, Ph.D. Dragan Mirkovic, Ph.D.

Radhe Mohan, Ph.D. Manickam Muruganandham, Ph.D Christopher Lee Nelson, Ph.D. Falk Poenisch, Ph.D. Julianne Pollard, Ph.D. Narayan Sahoo, Ph.D. Mohammad Salehpour, Ph.D. Almon Shiu, Ph.D. Marilyn Stovall, Ph.D. Yelin Suh, Ph.D. Kazumichi Suzuki, Ph.D. Ramesh Tailor, Ph.D. Uwe Titt, Ph.D. Sastry Vedam, Ph.D. Catherine Wang, Ph.D. Congjun Wang, Ph.D. Xiaochun Wang, Ph.D. Xin Wang, Ph.D. Zhifei Weng, Ph.D. James Yang, Ph.D. Xiaodong Zhang, Ph.D. Zhongxiang Zhao, Ph.D. X. Ronald Zhu, Ph.D.

#### **PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

Francisco Aquirre, M.S. Paola Elisa Alvarez, M.S. Gary Fisher, M.S. Mark Garcia, M.S. Robert Gastorf, M.S. Jennifer Johnson, M.S. Steve Kirsner, M.S. Kelly Kisling, M.S. Ann Lawyer, M.S. Jessica Leif, M.S. MingFwu Lii, M.S. Mark Marshall, M.S. Bryan Mason, M.S. Andrea Molineu, M.S. Jared Ohrt, M.S. Laura-Ann Rechner, M.S. Ronald Cole Robinson, M.S. Ramaswamy Sadagopan, M.S. Paige Summers, M.S. Tzouh-Liang Sun, M.S. Samuel Tung, M.S. Pei-Fong Wong, M.S. Richard Wu, M.S.

#### 1968



Uwe Titt MD Anderson Cancer Center Email: <u>utitt@mdanderson.org</u> Phone: (++1) 713 563 2558

**Panel (a)** compares beamlet integral DD data for <sup>+</sup>p, <sup>3</sup>He, <sup>4</sup>He and <sup>12</sup>C ions. The fragmentation effect for <sup>12</sup>C, even for monoenergetic ions, is significant and will be much greater for a spread-out Bragg peak.

**Panel (b)** compares profiles at the D<sub>max</sub> for ion energies with a range of 27 cm for scanned beams (6 cm diameter) for the same set of ions.

**Panel (c)** compares corresponding penumbra widths (80-20% and 90-10%) for all ions of interest. Heavier ions are significantly superior compared to protons, but the clinical significance of differences among ions from He to C is not *a priori* clear.



Relative dose distributions produced using 6 cm diameter beams of monoenergetic ions (27 cm range in water) for the same dose deposited at the Bragg peak.



- The out-of-field contributions are produced by secondary particles (mostly neutrons, protons, deuterons, alphas).
- The lateral spread of secondary particles is slightly greater for 3He than for <sup>4</sup>He.
- Secondary particle contributions are greatest for carbon, laterally and distally, which may be of concern due to their potential for inducing secondary malignancies. The color wash dose distributions are in log of percent of peak dose.