



Society for palliative radiation oncology: report from the Seventh Annual Meeting (2020)

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Abstract: The Society for Palliative Radiation Oncology (SPRO) is an international professional group dedicated to advancing the field of palliative radiation oncology by promoting evidence-based palliative radiotherapy and excellence in primary palliative care through research, education, collaboration, and patient advocacy. SPRO held its 7th Annual Meeting on October 28, 2020 over a virtual platform in association with the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) 62nd Annual Meeting. Short and long-term goals for the Society were detailed and the accomplishments since SPRO's 6th Annual Meeting were reviewed. New research was presented during a series of two-minute rapid fire educational sessions given by speakers selected to present in the scientific palliative care track at the ASTRO Annual Meeting. Recipients of the Lifetime Service Award and the Rising Star Award were announced and presented. This Meeting Report summarizes the proceedings of the 7th Annual Meeting and describes future directions for SPRO.

Keywords: Palliative radiation therapy; Society for Palliative Radiation Oncology (SPRO); palliative care

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The Society for Palliative Radiation Oncology (SPRO) is an international group of clinicians who are passionate about delivering high quality, evidence-based palliative radiotherapy (1). SPRO held its 7th Annual Meeting (and first virtual meeting) on October 28, 2020 in association with the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) 62nd Annual Meeting. Building on the goals outlined during the 2019 Annual Meeting (2), approximately 45 attendees (including radiation oncologists, palliative care physicians, residents, and medical students) reflected on accomplishments and established goals for the upcoming year (*Figure 1*). New, this year, were rapid fire (2-minute) presentations (*Table 1*) from individuals selected to present for the educational or scientific palliative care track at the ASTRO Annual Meeting. Two SPRO awards were also presented: The Lifetime Service Award and the Rising Star

Award (*Table 2*).

Dr. Simon Lo presented the SPRO Lifetime Service Award to Dr. Stephen Lutz (*Figure 2*), a renowned expert in palliative radiation oncology. Dr. Lutz is dual board certified in radiation oncology and hospice and palliative medicine, and he is widely regarded as one of the world leaders in palliative radiotherapy. In addition to founding SPRO in 2014, Dr. Lutz has served in leadership roles for multiple professional organizations, including ASTRO, the American College of Radiology (ACR), the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group (RTOG), and the American Board of Radiology (ABR). Dr. Lutz has led bone metastases guidelines by ASTRO (4) and ACR (5), and he and has given numerous lectures at prestigious national and international conferences. He has over 100 peer-reviewed

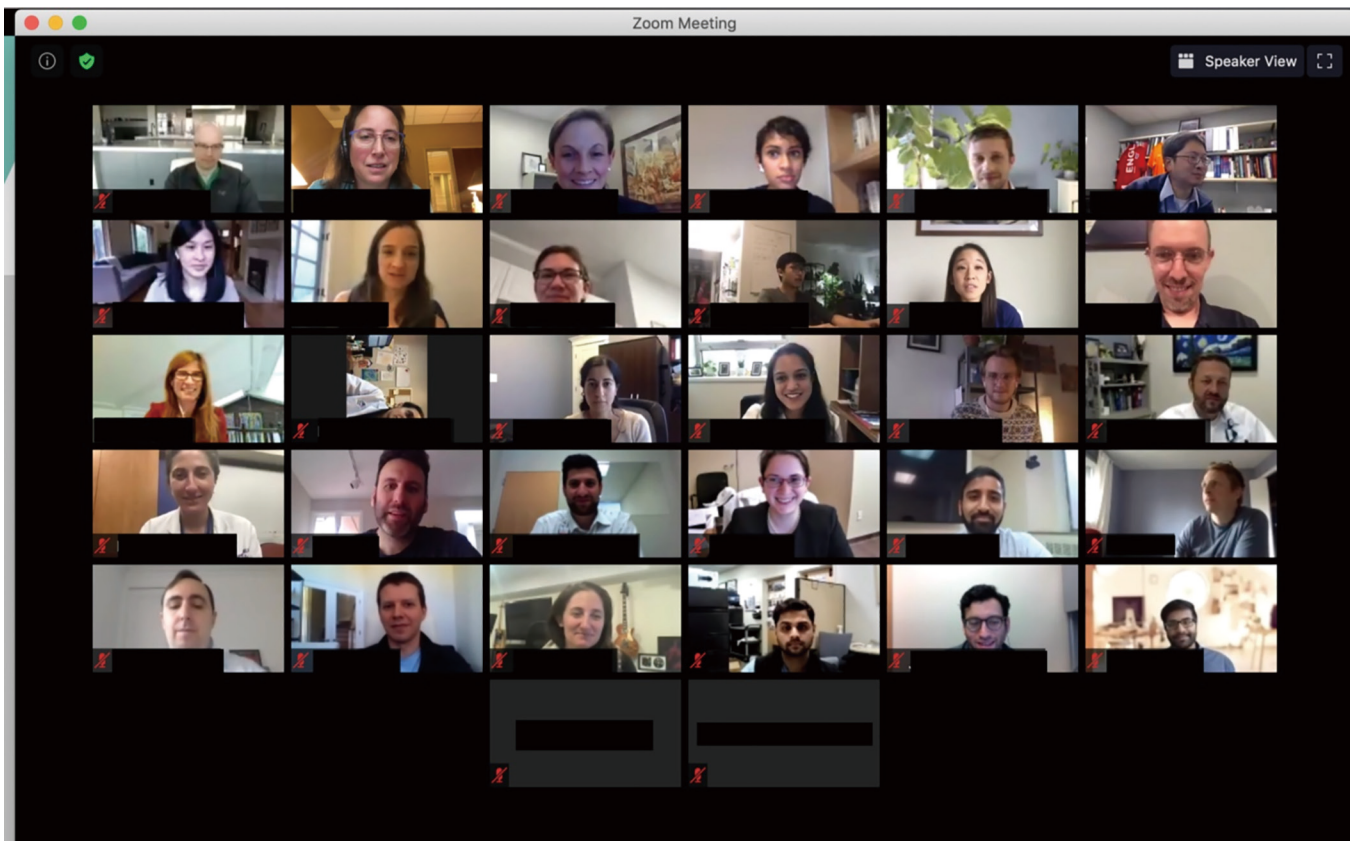


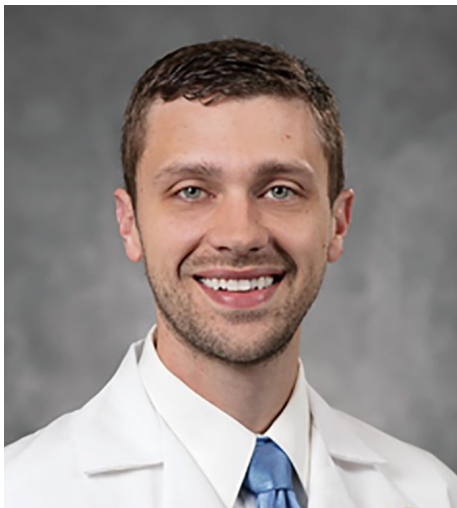
Figure 1 SPRO attendees on zoom.

Table 1 Rapid fire abstract presentations (3)

Presenter	Title
Peter Hoskin	Prognostic factors for survival with metastatic spinal cord compression in the SCORAD randomised trial
Tetsuo Saito	Influence of the Pain Duration on Pain Outcomes Following Palliative Radiotherapy for Painful Tumors
Anish Butala	The Impact of Provider-Driven Serious Illness Conversations on Length of Palliative Radiotherapy for Bone Metastases
Subha Perni	Predictors of 30-day Mortality Following Palliative Radiation
Annie LaVigne	External Validation of the Bone Metastases Ensemble Trees for Survival (BMETS) Machine Learning Model to Improve Estimation of Life Expectancy
Susan Wu	Classification of Patients at Imminent Risk of Death at the Time of Palliative Radiotherapy Consultation
David Palma	Stereotactic Radiation for the Comprehensive Treatment of Oligometastatic Cancers (SABR-COMET) Long-Term Results
Roshal Patel	High + Low-Dose Radiation for Metastases Progressing on Immunotherapy
Christopher Weil	Perioperative Radiotherapy for Impending or Pathologic Fractures: Is There a Difference Between Single and Multifraction Regimens?
Denise Vidot	Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Cancer Patients Who Endorse Medicinal Cannabis Use

Table 2 Awards

2020 Awards	Recipient
Lifetime Achievement Award	Steven T. Lutz, MD
Rising Star Award	Andrew Bruggeman, MD

**Figure 2** Steven T. Lutz, MD, 2021 Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient.**Figure 3** Andrew Bruggeman, MD, 2021 Rising Star Award Recipient.

publications, primarily addressing palliative oncology, palliative radiotherapy, and hospice. Notably, he was named a fellow of ASTRO in 2014.

Dr. Emily Martin presented the SPRO Rising Star Award to Dr. Andrew Bruggeman (*Figure 3*), a faculty member in the Department of Radiation Medicine and Applied Sciences at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). Dr. Bruggeman completed residency training in both internal medicine and radiation oncology at UCSD. In July 2019, Dr. Bruggeman joined the UCSD radiation oncology faculty as the Palliative Radiotherapy Section Chief. In this role, he has worked tirelessly to develop a new palliative radiotherapy program—creating departmental guidelines, streamlining palliative radiotherapy workflows, and regularly rounding with the inpatient palliative care service. Although early in his career, Dr. Bruggeman has already made significant contributions to the field of palliative oncology. His recent publications include an evaluation of the utilization of evidence-based prognostic tools among palliative care providers (6), a review article addressing cancer cachexia (7), and a manuscript comparing the toxicity and palliative efficacy of esophageal stenting and palliative radiotherapy for patients with metastatic esophageal cancer (8). Notably, Dr. Bruggeman was awarded the 2018 ASCO Young Investigator Award for his proposal to implement an integrated palliative care clinic in the Department of Radiation Oncology at UCSD.

Dr. Kristopher Dennis presented an overview of the Canadian Palliative Radiation Oncology Group (CPROG), a network of clinicians with an interest in palliative radiotherapy and supportive care. CPROG hosts monthly virtual meetings featuring short presentations and lively discussions on topics relevant to palliative radiation oncology and supportive care. It is a forum to discuss palliative educational initiatives and research proposals, hear about ongoing and recently published studies, participate in case-based clinical discussions and network with similarly interested clinicians and trainees. CPROG now formally resides under the administrative umbrella of the new Supportive Care Committee of the Canadian Association of Radiation Oncology (CARO). Individuals interested in participating in CPROG are encouraged to contact the corresponding author.

Dr. Chuck Simone, Editor-in-Chief of *Annals of Palliative Medicine* (APM), highlighted recent accomplishments of APM. Since the open-access peer review journal was launched in 2012, APM has become indexed in PubMed, Medline, Scopus, and SCIE. The journal received its first impact factor in 2019 (9), which has increased in the following years. APM includes a Palliative Radiotherapy Column co-edited by Drs. Edward Chow and Candice

Johnstone.

Dr. Divya Yerramilli from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center highlighted practical questions pertaining to the management of patients with advanced cancer. These include how to approach systemic therapies that may temporally overlap with palliative radiotherapy and the role and extent of post-radiotherapy surveillance protocols. These topics were discussed in small group breakout rooms and next steps were outlined.

Due to the success of the virtual format, SPRO will be holding quarterly virtual meetings to further our efforts. Please contact SPRO or the corresponding author to suggest a topic or talk for these quarterly meetings. The Annual Meeting Committee will be responsible for curating content and welcomes additional volunteers.

Goals were developed for the coming year. SPRO is in the final stages of obtaining non-profit status, which should be established before the end of 2020. We discussed the structure of the committees, current membership of the committees, and ongoing need for additional volunteers (please contact admin@spro.org for details). The current five committees include membership, annual meeting, finance, awards, and communication. Once SPRO has achieved non-profit status, members will be notified about dues, which are a requirement for active membership. These dues will fund the application for non-profit status and ongoing expenses related to being a non-profit society, ensure continued funding for awards and other SPRO activities. A call for nominations for the Lifetime Service and Rising Star Awards will be announced in Summer 2021. The Palliative Radiotherapy Column published in *Annals of Palliative Medicine* has been reinvigorated and we will update our website (www.spro.org). New ideas and members are always welcome! Contact the corresponding author or admin@spro.org by email.

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Footnote

Conflicts of Interest: All authors have completed the ICMJE uniform disclosure form (available at <https://dx.doi.org/10.21037/apm-2021-03>). CJ serves as the Chair of Palliative Radiotherapy Subcommittee of *Annals of Palliative Medicine* from Jul 2019 to Jun 2021. YDT serves as an unpaid editorial board member of *Annals of Palliative Medicine* from

May 2019 to Apr 2021. CBS 2nd serves as the Editor-in-Chief of *Annals of Palliative Medicine*. The other authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Ethical Statement: The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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