Supportive care for patients receiving radiotherapy

Radiotherapy is one of the most useful modalities in cancer treatment because those who have carcinoma from various primaries have chances to receive radiotherapy in many situations. Medical staffs must have enough knowledge and skills to manage side effects which are different in each irradiated site.

1. Side effect; onset site
Acute toxicities induced by radiotherapy occur at irradiation field. Because multiple field radiotherapy and Intensity modulated radiotherapy are widely used recently, we had better consider not only high dose area on target but also low dose area around the target.

2. Side effect; onset time
Acute toxicities induced by radiotherapy are not always seen at initiation of treatment and gradually worsen in the treatment latter half. More, these toxicities don’t improve until the end of radiotherapy.

3. Side effect; Late toxicity
Late toxicities are often decreased by continuous supportive care although we cannot prevent it completely. Medical staffs should make effort to obtain the trust from the patients and give continuous education about how to reduce late toxicities. It is important that patients and medical staffs understand an invisible modality, radiotherapy and cooperate with each other to reduce toxicities.