



**AMSTRO**  
Asia and Middle East Society of  
Therapeutic Radiation and Oncology  
Affiliated with ASTF

## AMSTRO NEWSLETTER

*Shaping the Future of Cancer Care*

### A SPECIAL RECAP ISSUE: THE INAUGURAL AMSTRO 2026 GLOBAL ONCOLOGY CONFERENCE

Dubai, United Arab Emirates | February 6–8, 2026

Regional Voices • Global Collaboration  
**Volume 1 | Issue 1 | August 2026**

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# ABOUT THIS ISSUE

AMSTRO Newsletter is the official publication of the Asia and Middle East Society of Therapeutic Radiation and Oncology (AMSTRO), affiliated with ASTF. This inaugural issue highlights AMSTRO’s First Annual Scientific Meeting, held in Dubai, UAE, February 6–8, 2026.



**Dr. Kevin Martell**  
MD, FRCPC, DRCPSC, DABR  
Editor  
University of Calgary, Canada



**Dr. Mariam Hina**  
Associate Editor  
CyberKnife & Tomotherapy  
Center, Pakistan

## EDITOR’S NOTE

### Welcome to Volume 1, Issue 1

Dr. Kevin Martell is a Canadian radiation oncologist and brachytherapy specialist with expertise in genitourinary and gynecologic cancers. He completed his Radiation Oncology training at the University of Calgary and pursued advanced brachytherapy fellowship training at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, University of Toronto. He was among the first radiation oncologists in Canada to receive the Royal College Area of Focused Competence diploma in Brachytherapy.

Dr. Martell is actively involved in research, education, and innovation in modern radiation oncology, with particular interest in image-guided brachytherapy, advanced radiotherapy techniques, and the integration of emerging technologies into cancer care.

*“The future of radiation oncology depends on innovation, collaboration, and our commitment to continuously advancing cancer care. AMSTRO provides an exciting platform to strengthen education, research, mentorship, and regional partnerships while supporting the next generation of oncology professionals across Asia and the Middle East.”*

# AMSTRO 2026 in Review

The inaugural AMSTRO Global Oncology Conference — Dubai, UAE — February 6–8, 2026

1,350+

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS  
(425+ in-person · 930+ virtual)

159

ABSTRACTS SUBMITTED  
(108 Rad Onc · 51 Med Phys/RTT)

13

KEYNOTE AND INVITED LECTURES

6+1

PANEL DISCUSSIONS  
+ Young Leaders Panel

3

PARALLEL SCIENTIFIC  
TRACKS

139

ACCEPTED POSTER  
ABSTRACTS

11

POSTER AWARDS  
(6 Rad Onc, 3 Med Phys, 2 RTT)

4

ORAL PRESENTER  
TRAVEL GRANTS

## Dr. Hussein Alkushi, MBBS, FRCPC



**President, AMSTRO**  
**Head, Radiation Oncology Dept.**  
**Princess Norah Oncology Center**  
**(PNOC), Jeddah, Saudi Arabia**

***“The establishment of AMSTRO reflects a shared regional commitment toward advancing radiation oncology through collaboration, education, and innovation. As we launch our inaugural newsletter following our first annual conference, we celebrate the growth of a professional community united by a common goal: to improve cancer care across our region.”***

Dr. Hussein Alkushi is a distinguished radiation oncologist and healthcare leader serving as Head of the Radiation Oncology Department at Princess Norah Oncology Center, King Abdulaziz Medical City, Jeddah. He has played a pivotal role in advancing precision radiation oncology services, multidisciplinary cancer care, and academic collaboration across the region. As the President of AMSTRO, Dr. Alkushi envisions the society as a premier regional platform for scientific exchange, education, research, and regional cooperation in radiation oncology across Asia and the Middle East.

## Dr. M. Saiful Huq, PhD, FAAPM, FInstP



**Vice President, AMSTRO  
Professor of Radiation  
Oncology,  
University of Pittsburgh  
Director of Medical Physics,  
UPMC Hillman Cancer Center,  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA**

***“True progress in cancer care is achieved when knowledge, innovation, and opportunity are shared beyond borders. AMSTRO represents more than a professional society: it is a platform for regional transformation, collaboration, and future leadership in radiation oncology.”***

Dr. M. Saiful Huq is an internationally recognized medical physicist, educator, and global health leader serving as Professor of Radiation Oncology at the University of Pittsburgh and Director of Medical Physics at UPMC Hillman Cancer Center. A Past President and Chair of the Board of Directors of the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM), he has dedicated his career to advancing radiation oncology through scientific innovation, international education, workforce development, and global partnerships. Through his leadership across academia, professional societies, and international organizations, he continues to champion equitable access to high-quality cancer care worldwide.

## Dr. Nadeem Pervez, MBBS, FFRRCSI, Dip. Mgt., FRCPC, MSc



General Secretary,  
AMSTRO  
MBBS, FFRRCSI, Dip. Mgt.,  
FRCPC, MSc

*“The future of radiation oncology depends not only on innovation and technology, but also on mentorship, collaboration, and supporting the next generation of oncologists. Through AMSTRO, we aim to inspire young professionals, encourage new ideas, and strengthen academic partnerships across the region.”*

Dr. Nadeem Pervez is an internationally recognized radiation oncologist with academic and clinical experience across Ireland, Canada, and the Middle East. He previously served at the Cross Cancer Institute and the University of Alberta, Canada, where he contributed significantly to breast and prostate cancer management, resident education, clinical research, and the development of prostate brachytherapy programs. Widely recognized for his contributions to mentorship, research, and multidisciplinary oncology care, Dr. Pervez has remained actively involved in international academic collaboration and oncology training initiatives.

OPENING REMARKS

Prof. M. Saiful Huq, Vice President, AMSTRO — Welcome Address, February 6, 2026

*“Moments like this matter—because they mark the point where intention becomes commitment, and collaboration begins to change outcomes.”*

A THREE-DAY JOURNEY, BY DESIGN

*Key themes from Prof. Huq’s inaugural welcome address*

DAY 1

Leadership, Diplomacy & Regional Action

*“It is about aligning voices, building trust, and establishing a shared direction.”*

DAY 2

Health Systems, Science & Regional Empowerment

*“We shift from vision to execution — grounded in evidence and informed by global frameworks.”*

DAY 3

Capacity, Commitment & the AMSTRO Way Forward

*“The day where conversation turns into accountability.”*

## Day 1: Leadership, Diplomacy & Regional Action

February 6, 2026 — Zayed University Convention Center, Dubai, UAE & Online (Hybrid)

SETTING THE TONE



**Prof. John Armstrong**

**Past President, IARO, Ireland**

*Opening Keynote: Embracing the Future of Radiation Oncology*



**Dr. Faheem (FARO) · Dr. Balaraj (Tawam) · Dr. Al Ameri (EORA) · Dr. Bin Sumaida (ESRO) · Mr. Abdulla Alhammadi (Session Chair)**

**Presidential Fireside Panel**

*Leading Together: Shaping the Future of Global Oncology Through Regional Collaboration*



**Her Royal Highness Princess Dina Mired**

**Jordan**

*Opening Keynote: Equity, Dignity, and Leadership: Reimagining Cancer Care for All*

GLOBAL VOICES FOR REGIONAL ACTION



**Dr. May Abdel-Wahab**

Director, Division of Human Health,  
IAEA, Vienna

*From Global Priorities to Regional Action:  
Advancing Equitable Radiotherapy in the  
AMSTRO Region*



**Her Excellency Dr. Zainab  
Shinkafi-Bagudu**

President-Elect, UICC

*Cancer Control Beyond Clinics: The Power  
of Policy, Advocacy, and Political Will*



**Prof. Neha Vapiwala, MD**

President, ASTRO, USA

*Special Video Address from ASTRO President*

## INNOVATION, PATIENTS & GLOBAL LEADERSHIP



**Mr. Cupid Chan**  
**CEO, Pistevo Decision, USA**

*Brainrot or Breakthrough? What “67” Can Teach Oncology AI?*



**Dr. Wil Ngwa · Dr. Mareya Almarzouqi (UAE) · HRH Princess Dina Mired**  
**Patient Voices: A Conversation with Global Leaders**

*From Survival to Purpose: Patient Voices Shaping the Future of Cancer Care*



**Prof. Matthias Guckenberger**  
**President, ESTRO**

*Emerging Opportunities in Radiation Oncology: Overcoming Dissemination and Implementation Challenges*

EQUITY, WORKFORCE & THE NEXT GENERATION



**Dr. Julie Gralow**  
**EVP & Chief Medical Officer, ASCO, USA**

*From Evidence to Equity: Delivering High-Quality Cancer Care Everywhere*



**Dr. Andrew Maidment**  
**(President-Elect, AAPM)**  
**Dr. Wsam Ghandourah**  
**(Session Chair)**  
**Dr. Mohammad Hassan Kharita**  
**(President, MEFOMP)**

**Medical Physics Workforce Panel**

*Global Expertise, Regional Impact: Building the Medical Physics Workforce Together*



**Wael · Shaukat · Al Ghaferi**  
**·Alkanash**

**Young Leaders Panel**

*Next-Generation Voices: Challenges and Opportunities in Cancer Care Across the AMSTRO Region*

BEST OF AMSTRO

Top Scientific Abstracts Across Disciplines

Dr. Yumna Ali · Dr. Maham Khan

KEYNOTE

Psychological Injury in Cancer Care

Dr. Ahmed Abdulaziz Alnajjar, UAE

GLOBAL FORUM

Ask the World's Cancer Leaders:  
A Live Global Public Forum

Featuring the day's global cancer leaders —  
chaired by Dr. Abdalla Alnajjar

DAY 1 CLOSE

Closing Remarks and Day 1 Wrap-Up

Dr. Nadeem Pervez, General Secretary, AMSTRO

## Day 2: Health Systems, Science & Regional Empowerment

February 7, 2026 — Zayed University Convention Center, Dubai, UAE & Online (Hybrid)

GLOBAL VOICES FOR REGIONAL ACTION



**Prof. Wilfred Ngwa**  
**Founding Director, Global Health Catalyst**

*From Evidence to Impact: Building the Oncology Workforce as the Foundation of Strong Health Systems*



**Dr. Hedvig Hricak · Dr. Mohamed Fawzi (Egypt MOH) · Mr. Mark Stoesz**

**Imaging to Impact Panel**

*Implementing the WHA Resolution for Cancer Care in the AMSTRO Region*



**Mr. David Jelley (Mediclinic Parkview Hospital)**  
**Dr. Aly Abdel Razek (GICC)**  
**Mr. M. Nasim Sabir (PMC)**  
**Hospital CEO Panel**

*From Vision to Delivery: Leading Cancer Care Across Diverse Health Systems*

INDUSTRY LEADERS ON THE MAIN STAGE

From Innovation to Impact: Industry's Role in Building Sustainable Cancer Systems — moderated by Prof. M. Saiful Huq



Sasa Mutic, Ph.D., FAAPM  
President, Varian



Mr. Olivier Legrain  
CEO, IBA



Dr. Rock Mackie  
Executive Chairman, Leo Cancer Care



Dr. Qiang “AI” Zhang  
President & CEO, United Imaging Healthcare



Mr. Mahmudul Hasan  
Founder & CEO, Mvision AI

# DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS

KEYNOTE

**Adaptive and Emergency Radiotherapy**  
*Prof. Junjie Wang*

POSTER WALK

**Judged Poster Walk**  
**(139 accepted posters)**  
*AMSTRO Judges*

TECH SHOWCASE

**Health System & Technology**  
**Innovations**  
*Dr. Khalid Balaraj & Dr. Hamda Al Neyadi*

TECH SHOWCASE

**Innovations in Radiotherapy**  
*Dr. Nour Uri Alkaily*

TECH SHOWCASE

**IBA's Proton Therapy Solutions**  
*Dr. Mou Chergou*

TECH SHOWCASE

**Vision RT Reimagined SGRT**  
*Mr. Said Elhajfari*

TECH SHOWCASE

**MEVION Leadership & S250FIT**  
*Dr. Gokay Celik*

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Medical Oncology Track — Where Evidence is Changing Practice in Solid Tumor Oncology

NSCLC

- Immunotherapy in Early-Stage NSCLC: Shaping the Future of Curative Intent Therapy  
*Dr. Emad Anwar Dawoud , Tawam Hospital, UAE*

HEAD & NECK

- Redefining Systemic Therapy in Advanced HNSCC: From Platinum and Cetuximab to Immunotherapy and Beyond  
*Dr. Taher Abu Hejleh, Abdali Hospital, Jordan*

BREAST CANCER

- Adjuvant CDK4/6 Inhibitors in Early Breast Cancer: Shifting the Standard of Care  
*Dr. M. Husam Marashi, Tawam Hospital, UAE*
- Triple-Positive Breast Cancer: MBC First-Line Therapy  
*Dr. Sundus Yahya, Tawam Hospital, UAE*

COLORECTAL CANCER

- Checkpoint Inhibitors in MSI-H Colon Cancer: Expanding the Horizon  
*Dr. Diaeddine Trad, Burjeel Hospital, UAE*
- Tailoring Adjuvant Therapy in Colon Cancer Using ctDNA  
*Dr. Aladdin Maarraoui, Gulf International Cancer Center, Abu Dhabi, UAE*

GASTRIC CANCER

- Frontline Management of Advanced Gastric Cancer  
*Dr. Hassan Sheheryar, American Hospital Dubai, UAE*

GENITOURINARY (GU)

- Optimizing Pre-Operative Treatment in Bladder Cancer  
*Dr. Syed Hammad Tirmazy, Dubai Health Authority, UAE*

GYNECOLOGIC ONCOLOGY

- Modern Systemic Strategies for Gynecologic Cancers: Expanding the Role of Immunotherapy  
*Dr. Fathi Azribi, American Hospital Dubai, UAE*

## SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

*Radiation Oncology Track — Global Perspectives in SBRT, Hypofractionation & Precision RT*

### BREAST

- Ultra-Hypofractionation in Breast Cancer: Current Data and Clinical Integration  
*Dr. Sean Park, Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center, USA*

### GENITOURINARY (GU)

- SBRT & Adaptive RT in GU Cancers  
*Dr. Mohamed Shelan, University Hospital Bern, Switzerland*

### NSCLC

- Role of SBRT in NSCLC  
*Dr. Anoud Alnsour, King Hussein Cancer Center, Amman*

### RENAL

- Use of SBRT in Localized Disease  
*Dr. Ramiz Abu Hijlih, King Hussein Cancer Center, Amman*

### OLIGOMETTS

- From Clinical Evidence to Global Application of SABR  
*Dr. Mutlay Sayan, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston*

### HEPATOBIILIARY

- Practical Aspects of Liver Motion Management in RT  
*Dr. Khaled Alrabiah, King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Centre, Riyadh*

### GI

- MR-Guided Radiotherapy in GI Cancers  
*Prof. Banu Atalar, Acibadem University, Turkey*

### SFRT

- Clinical SFRT & Minibeam Experience  
*Dr. Sean S. Park, Mayo Clinic, USA*

### AI

- AI-Driven Adaptive Radiotherapy — Transforming Precision in GI Malignancies  
*Dr. Zahid Almandhari, Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Center, Oman*

### RESEARCH

- Structuring from Concept to Clinical Impact  
*Dr. Andrew Loblaw, Sunnybrook Hospital, University of Toronto*

# DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS

## SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

*Medical Physics & RTT Track — Mentorship, Research & Snap Oral Presentations*

### MENTORSHIP & LEADERSHIP

- Why Mentorship Matters: From Patient Care to Professional Growth  
*Dr. Wil Ngwa, USA*
- Lessons from Mentorship in Oncology and Innovation  
*Dr. Rockwell Mackie, USA*
- Quality Improvement Research: Linking Mentorship to Impactful Research and Leadership  
*Dr. Jazieh Abdulrahman, USA*

### SNAP ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- Evaluation of Planning Target Margins in Head and Neck Cancer Radiotherapy:  
A Multicentric Experience from Bangladesh  
*Mr. Md. Jobairul Islam, Bangladesh*
- Improving Setup Precision in DIBH Radiotherapy for Left-Sided Breast Cancer  
*Dr. Swapna Lilly Cyriac, India*
- Comparative Evaluation of DIR-Based Auto-Adaptive Contouring for Pelvic OARs in Cervical Cancer ART  
*Mr. Moaz Mohammed Zakaria, UAE*
- Development and Validation of a Low-Cost Prostate Brachytherapy Ultrasound QA Phantom (AAPM TG-128)  
*Mr. Hamid Jamil, Pakistan*
- Optimizing Quality of Life in Cervical Cancer Survivors: Comparing Three HDR Brachytherapy Applicators  
*Ms. Duaa Alhawi, Saudi Arabia*

### AI AUTOMATION

- Why AI and Automation: Preparing for the Future of Medical Physics  
*Dr. Gustavo Olivera, USA*

# DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS

## SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

*Medical Physics & RTT Track — Mentorship, Research & Snap Oral Abstracts*

### BRACHYTHERAPY

- The Brachytherapy Renaissance: Education and Skills Expansion for Modern Practice  
*Mr. Arjit Baghwala, USA*

### SERVICE DELIVERY

- Technical Innovations in Regional Radiation Therapy Services  
*Dr. Rabih Hammoud, Qatar*

### WORKFORCE

- Medical Physics for Therapeutic Radiation Education and Training: The Saudi Arabian Experience  
*Dr. Ismail Aldahlawi, Saudi Arabia*
- Current Landscape of Radiation Therapy Education and Training in the EMRO and Asia Region  
*Ms. Zaheeda Mulla, Saudi Arabia*

### ROUNDTABLE

- Unifying Regional Efforts: Towards a Collaborative Education and Training Ecosystem  
*Dr. Mohammad Hassan Kharita · Dr. Ismail Aldahlawi · Ms. Zaheeda Mulla*

## Day 3: Capacity, Commitment & the AMSTRO Way Forward

February 8, 2026 — Zayed University Convention Center, Dubai, UAE & Online (Hybrid)

BUILDING FOR THE LONG TERM



**Dr. Andrew Maidment**

President-Elect, AAPM, USA

*Panel: Redefining Expertise — Medical Physics Education and Practice in the AI Era*



**Prof. M. Saiful Huq**

Vice President, AMSTRO

*Keynote: Comprehensive Cancer Center in the Cloud Powered by AI*



**Dr. Gustavo Olivera**

CEO, Quantum Theranostics, USA

*Keynote: From Physics to Patients — The Promise of Quantum Medicine in Cancer Care*

# DAY 3 HIGHLIGHTS

## KEYNOTE

**Faculty as Infrastructure: Scaling Training for Sustainable Cancer Care**

*Dr. Jamal Khader, Chair, KHCC Academy for Training & Education*

## CLOSING

**Dr. Nadeem Pervez formally thanked all participants and closes AMSTRO's inaugural meeting**

*Dr. Nadeem Pervez, General Secretary, AMSTRO*

# DAY 3 HIGHLIGHTS

## THE DECLARATION ADOPTION CEREMONY



## AMSTRO Declaration: A Shared Commitment to the Future of Cancer Care

### Presiding

**Dr. Nadeem Pervez, General Secretary, AMSTRO (Chair)**

**Prof. M. Saiful Huq, Vice President, AMSTRO (Moderator)**

On the final morning of AMSTRO's inaugural meeting, the Society's founding leadership formally adopted the AMSTRO Declaration—its Mission, Vision, and five Founding Goals to guide the Society's future. The full Declaration is reproduced later in this issue.

# BEST OF AMSTRO

*Celebrating the outstanding research and researchers recognized at AMSTRO’s inaugural meeting*

ORAL PRESENTATION WINNERS

Top Scientific Abstracts Across Disciplines — presented on February 6, (Day 1)



**Dr. Yumna Ahmed**

Radiation Oncology, Pakistan

*Comparative Effectiveness of Verbal Instruction vs. Simulation Video Education in Radiation Therapy*



**Dr. Maham Khan**

Radiation Oncology, Pakistan

*Radiation Dose and Volume Changes in the Masticatory Apparatus and Correlation with Trismus*



**Mr. Ali Eid**

Medical Physicist, Bahrain

*Machine Learning Model using In-Vivo Dosimetry as a Surrogate QA Tool for Predicting Setup Reproducibility and Residual Shifts in Right-Sided Breast Radiotherapy*

Four travel grants were awarded to presenting authors - two Radiation Oncologists, one Medical Physicist, and one RTT - to support their attendance at AMSTRO 2026

POSTER AWARDS

Eleven posters were recognized across three disciplines

6

Radiation Oncology  
Poster Awards

3

Medical Physics  
Awards

2

RTT  
Awards



POSTER AWARD RECIPIENTS

RADIATION ONCOLOGY

- Dr. Rupa Das
- Dr. Sanaa Naeem
- Dr. Faiqa Aslam
- Dr. Wajeeha Anjum
- Dr. Mansoor Rafi
- Dr. Waseem Shareef

MEDICAL PHYSICS

- Dr. Biju P. Thomas
- Dr. Mostafa AlEtreby
- Mr. Abdullah Mahrous

RADIATION THERAPY TECHNOLOGISTS (RTTs)

- Dr. Wsam Ghandourah
- Mr. Faisal Alshamrani

## AMSTRO GOLD MEDAL Distinguished Service Award



The inaugural AMSTRO Global Oncology Conference recognized outstanding leadership and service to cancer care through its highest honors. Dr. Hamda Salem Al Neyadi (4th from left) was awarded the AMSTRO Silver Medal in recognition of her exceptional leadership and contributions to healthcare strategy, communications, and regional oncology initiatives. Prof. M. Saiful Huq (5th from left) received the inaugural AMSTRO Gold Medal in recognition of his distinguished international leadership in medical physics and global oncology, his lifelong contributions to education, research, and workforce development, and his visionary leadership in shaping the strategic vision, mission, and international growth of AMSTRO as a leading platform for collaboration, innovation, and excellence in cancer care.

### **Dr. Hamda Salem Al Neyadi**

**Dr. Hamda Salem Al Neyadi** is Group Director of Marketing and Communications for SEHA–PureHealth, UAE. With more than 25 years of leadership experience, she has transformed healthcare communications, patient engagement, and organizational branding across one of the region's largest healthcare systems. Her strategic leadership has strengthened national healthcare initiatives and advanced excellence in patient-centered care throughout the UAE.

### **Prof. M. Saiful Huq, PhD, FAAPM, FInstP**

**Prof. M. Saiful Huq** is Professor of Radiation Oncology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and Director of Medical Physics at UPMC Hillman Cancer Center, USA. An internationally recognized leader in medical physics, he is a Past President of the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM) and has devoted his career to advancing radiation oncology, global cancer education, workforce development, and equitable access to high-quality cancer care worldwide.

BEST ABSTRACTS

BEST OF AMSTRO WINNER

Comparative Effectiveness of Verbal Instruction versus Simulation Video Education among Cancer Patients Undergoing Radiation Therapy in a Lower-Middle-Income Country Centre: A Randomized Controlled Trial

Yumna Ahmed · Fatima Shaukat · Rabia Tahseen · Agha Hammad Khan · Jahangir Ahmed · Kanwar Arham · Urooba Jawwad

INTRODUCTION

Effective patient education improves understanding, reduces anxiety, and enhances compliance during radiation therapy (RT). Many patients start RT with limited knowledge, misconceptions, and fear, and verbal counseling alone is often insufficient, especially for low-literacy populations. This study evaluates the impact of a short, Urdu-language educational video on patient understanding, anxiety, and satisfaction in Pakistan.

METHODS

This Phase II, single-center randomized control trial was conducted at the CyberKnife and Tomotherapy Centre, JPMC, Karachi. A 3.5-minute Urdu educational video (100% understandability/actionability on PEMAT-A/V) was sent via WhatsApp to the Video Group before consultation; the Verbal Instruction Group received standard counseling only. Outcomes were assessed using validated pre- and post-intervention surveys.

RESULTS

One hundred patients were enrolled: 52 in the non-video group and 48 in the video group. Baseline knowledge did not differ significantly ( $p = 0.947$  process;  $p = 0.469$  side effects). The video group reported significantly higher satisfaction ( $p=0.001$ ), greater perceived helpfulness ( $p = 0.005$ ), and higher visit efficiency ( $p < 0.0001$ ). 92% of the non-video group said a pre-visit video would have helped.

CONCLUSION

The pre-consultation video significantly improved patient satisfaction, engagement, and consultation efficiency, demonstrating a practical, low-cost approach to patient-centered care in high-volume, resource-limited radiation therapy settings.

## BEST OF AMSTRO WINNER

### Assessment of Radiation Dose and Volume Changes in the Masticatory Apparatus and Clinical Correlation with Trismus in Oral Cavity Cancer Patients

*Maham Khan · Laraib Khan · Mariam Hina · Tooba Ali · Fabiha Shakeel · Maria Tariq · Asim Hafiz · Ahmed Nadeem Abbasi · Nasir Ali · Bilal Mazhar Qureshi*

#### PURPOSE

Oral cavity squamous cell carcinoma (OSCC) is the most common head and neck malignancy in South Asia, where adjuvant radiotherapy is integral to management. Radiation-induced dose–volume effects on the masticatory apparatus remain underexplored in South Asian populations. This study quantified dose and volumetric changes in masticatory muscles and correlated them with trismus.

#### METHODS

Thirty patients with OSCC undergoing adjuvant radiotherapy were prospectively enrolled. Baseline maximal incisor distance (MID) and masticatory muscle volumes were recorded at CT simulation; DVH parameters were extracted for masseter, pterygoid, and temporalis muscles, with trismus and repeat CT reassessed at 3 months.

#### RESULTS

The cohort included 28 males and 2 females, with a median age 56 years. All patients received adjuvant radiotherapy at doses of 6,600–7,000 cGy, and 70% received concurrent chemotherapy. Ipsilateral pterygoid muscle volume decreased by 20–35%, masseter volume by 15–30%, and temporalis volume by 10–25%; contralateral muscles were largely spared. Trismus worsened in 24/30 patients. A mean dose greater than 6,600 cGy to the ipsilateral masseter or pterygoid muscle correlated with greater volume loss and worsening trismus ( $r \approx 0.6$ – $0.7$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

#### CONCLUSION

Radiation dose to the ipsilateral masticatory apparatus is strongly associated with volumetric muscle loss and trismus progression. Contouring and dose-constraint protocols targeting the masticatory muscles are needed to mitigate this functional morbidity.

# CASE DISCUSSIONS

*Two academic case discussions selected for their educational value*

CASE 1 — ACADEMIC CASE DISCUSSION

Pediatric Hypopharyngeal Squamous Cell Carcinoma: A Rare Clinical Entity

Maham Khan · Laraib Khan · Mariam Hina · Tooba Ali · Fabiha Shakeel · Maria Tariq · Asim Hafiz · Ahmed Nadeem Abbasi · Nasir Ali · Bilal Mazhar Qureshi

BACKGROUND

Hypopharyngeal squamous cell carcinoma is exceedingly uncommon in the pediatric population, with very limited cases reported worldwide. Unlike adult hypopharyngeal cancers, pediatric cases often lack traditional risk factors such as tobacco or alcohol exposure, making diagnosis and management particularly challenging.

CLINICAL PRESENTATION

A 15-year-old girl presented with progressive dysphagia to solids, cervical swelling, and significant weight loss. Contrast-enhanced imaging demonstrated a locally advanced hypopharyngeal lesion extending into the proximal cervical esophagus, paraesophageal tissues, and left thyroid lobe. Histopathology confirmed moderately differentiated keratinizing squamous cell carcinoma.

STAGING WORKUP

PET/CT revealed an intensely FDG-avid lesion involving the post-cricoid region and cervical esophagus, extending to the pyriform sinus and cervicothoracic junction, with infiltration into the posterior tracheal wall, thyroid gland, and regional nodal involvement. No distant metastases were identified.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY DISCUSSION AND TREATMENT

In the absence of a dedicated pediatric hypopharyngeal protocol, treatment approach was adapted from pediatric nasopharyngeal carcinoma protocols, with a prophylactic percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube placed before treatment. The patient underwent definitive concurrent chemoradiation to 70.2 Gy in 39 fractions, completed without interruption; acute toxicities - including grade 2 mucositis, dermatitis, and dysphagia-were managed conservatively.

LEARNING POINTS

Pediatric hypopharyngeal carcinoma is rare, and surgical resection is often challenging, making definitive chemoradiotherapy an important organ-preserving option. Early multidisciplinary evaluation, individualized planning, and long-term surveillance are essential.

## CASE 2 — CORE CLINICAL CASE

### Single-Fraction Lung SBRT: A Practical Guide

*Dr. Kevin Martell*

#### CLINICAL INDICATIONS

Tumors measuring less than 5 cm, located more than 4 cm from the mediastinum, and not abutting the chest wall are best suited for single-fraction SBRT; peripheral tumors touching the chest wall may still qualify with careful dose consideration. Pulmonary function testing ( $FEV_1 >45\text{--}55\%$  and  $DLCO >45\%$ ) is recommended pre-treatment.

#### SIMULATION AND PLANNING

4D-CT simulation with motion management (breath-hold, compression, gating) generates an iGTV; a 0–5 mm CTV margin and 4–8 mm PTV expansion are typical. VMAT/IMRT planning is critical for safety, with organ-at-risk constraints varying by protocol (e.g., 14 Gy spinal cord, 22 Gy heart, 20.2 Gy proximal bronchial tree).

#### DELIVERY AND VERIFICATION

CBCT-based onboard imaging with lung-window soft-tissue matching to the ITV is essential at treatment, with an additional mid-treatment CBCT for long-duration plans.

#### OUTCOMES AND FOLLOW-UP

Single-fraction lung SBRT is generally safe, with published cohorts reporting  $<3\%$  toxicity and  $>90\%$  local control. Standard post SBRT surveillance with clinical assessment and imaging is recommended.

# EARLY-CAREER PERSPECTIVES

*What draws the next generation of radiation oncology professionals to this work*

## Dr. Mohamed Albalushi



**Radiation Oncology Resident  
University of Alberta,  
Cross Cancer Institute, Canada**

*“What continues to inspire many within radiation oncology is the strong sense of community within the specialty and the shared commitment to improving patient care. From training in New Zealand to working in Oman and now continuing residency in Canada, I have had the privilege of experiencing how collaborative and supportive the global Radiation Oncology community can be.*

*Despite differences in healthcare systems and backgrounds, there remains a shared dedication to education, mentorship, and clinical excellence. It is an even greater privilege to be entering a field that continues to evolve while remaining firmly centered on improving care throughout each patient's journey.”*

## Dr. Annan Bamakrama



**Radiation Oncology Consultant  
King Faisal Specialist Hospital  
and Research Centre, Saudi Arabia**

*“Medicine has taught me that knowledge alone is not enough. Every patient we meet, every trainee we mentor, and every challenge we face gives us an opportunity to learn something valuable, to grow, and to make a meaningful difference.*

*Training and working across different cultures and healthcare systems broadened my appreciation for adaptability, teamwork, and respect for diverse perspectives.*

*Stay curious, stay humble, be open to learning from those around you and never be afraid to step outside your comfort zone. In the end, our greatest impact is not defined by titles or achievements, but by the people we inspire, support, and serve along the way. Excellence is not a destination — it is a habit.”*

# CERVICAL BRACHYTHERAPY IS NOT OPTIONAL

*An editorial perspective from Dr. Kevin Martell, Editor*

## Cervical Brachytherapy is NOT Optional

Every few years an argument is made to try and replace brachytherapy in the treatment of cervical cancer with external beam radiotherapy techniques. With this has come an adoption of external beam boosts despite evidence that it impacts patient survival [1]. There are several reasons for this including patient access to brachytherapy services, financial disincentives, workflow barriers, and a lack of training and knowledge gaps within the radiation oncology community [2]. In this context a recent meta-analysis by da Silva et al. should be discussed openly and honestly by the radiation oncology community in general [3].

To give a brief overview, the authors reviewed studies reporting on stereotactic body radiotherapy (SBRT) outcomes for cervical cancer. They report combined local control rates in excess of 90% and a survival rate (56%) which at face value appears concordant with well-established brachytherapy data. To be clear, the methodology used by da Silva et al. is not to be argued, given they did follow current PRISMA standards. However, in applying appropriate inclusion criteria they were only able to find 13 small (<60 patients) studies where no direct comparator cohorts were reported. This led to a conclusion that SBRT serves as a viable boost alternative for patients unable or unwilling to undergo brachytherapy.

It is this conclusion that I and many of my colleagues flat out reject [4]. Perhaps the review by AIRO in 2021 describes the current evidence for external beam radiotherapy boost techniques in cervical cancer best, in saying that prospective, randomized investigation is needed prior to any adopted change in practice [5]. I would remind anyone performing external-beam-only treatments for cervical cancer that 3D image-guided brachytherapy with interstitial is the penultimate technique for stabilizing pelvic anatomy, dose escalation, and elimination of PTV margins [6]. This “debate” over whether brachytherapy can be replaced has been had many times before, and unfortunately for the pro-beamers, in the data we do have, brachytherapy consistently outperforms external beam techniques in this space [7].

I openly acknowledge the argument that socioeconomic and patient comorbidity factors play a large role in both a patient's ability to get brachytherapy and their survival outcomes independent of one another, but that is not a reason to take a stance that external beam techniques are equivalent to brachytherapy, or that “dose is dose.” It is a reason to call for large-scale randomized trials comparing the two. Furthermore, I would remind the reader that the four studies offering both the survival statistics we provide to patients undergoing therapy for cervical cancer, and guidelines on overall treatment approaches, exclusively incorporated brachytherapy [8–13].

In reality, large-scale studies comparing SBRT and brachytherapy are years off. Some interesting work is being done — such as the VIBE study and SABRVICAL — but results are far from ready for prime time. Otherwise, in the MR-linac realm, MARGARITA and the Chiba University study may provide exciting preliminary insights. So perhaps in the future SBRT may become “a viable boost alternative” to brachytherapy in cervical cancer, but for now this oncologist will continue to push brachytherapy as a non-negotiable standard of care.

— Kevin Martell, BSc (Hon 1), MD, FRCPC, DRCPC, DABR | Radiation Oncologist

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# MISSION, VISION AND THE WAY FORWARD

*Formally adopted during the Closing Plenary on February 8, 2026*

# THE AMSTRO DECLARATION

## MISSION

*“To advance equitable, multidisciplinary, evidence-based, high-quality cancer care across Asia and the Middle East by strengthening therapeutic radiation oncology through education, research, clinical excellence, and health systems innovation. AMSTRO fosters regional and global collaboration, addresses systemic barriers, and empowers professionals to transform cancer care for all.”*

## VISION

*“To shape a future where resilient and patient-centered cancer care thrives across Asia and the Middle East — guided by innovation, regional leadership, and global collaboration.”*

## FIVE FOUNDING GOALS

- 1 Build a Unified Regional Network for Collaboration, Innovation, and Advocacy
- 2 Strengthen Oncology Education and Workforce Capacity
- 3 Ensure Equitable, High-Quality, and Patient-Centered Cancer Care Across Asia and the Middle East
- 4 Foster Innovation and Elevate Regional Research in Radiation Oncology
- 5 Strengthen Leadership and Governance for Sustainable Cancer Care

## GOAL 1: Build a Unified Regional Network for Collaboration, Innovation, and Advocacy

- Position AMSTRO as a trusted regional platform for convening oncology professionals and stakeholders across Asia and the Middle East.
- Strengthen engagement and mutual understanding with appropriate authorities, regional stakeholders, and global organizations (including IAEA, ESTRO, ASTRO, UICC, ASCO, AAPM, MEFOMP, GHC, and national societies).
- Collaborate with appropriate authorities to support national cancer control plans and promote coordination across the region.
- Establish an AMSTRO Regional Network Framework, connecting professional societies, major cancer centers, and academic partners across participating countries.
- Identify and formally recognize country focal points and regional champions to support coordination and communication.

## GOAL 2: Strengthen Oncology Education and Workforce Capacity

- Launch the AMSTRO School as a regional platform for education and training in radiation oncology, medical physics, and radiation therapy.
- Initiate pilot training-of-trainers programs to support capacity building across radiation oncology, medical physics, and radiation therapy.
- Deliver hybrid and cloud-based learning programs — including webinars, short courses, and case discussions — using the C4 platform.
- Map key workforce gaps and training needs across radiation oncologists, medical physicists, and radiation therapists in participating countries.

## GOAL 3: Ensure Equitable Care

- Promote shared approaches to quality assurance, guideline adaptation, and service delivery models that reflect local needs and resources.
- Support pilot activities that strengthen referral pathways, continuity of care, and quality improvement efforts across institutions.
- Encourage culturally sensitive, patient-centered care through education, professional dialogue, and knowledge exchange.

## GOAL 4: Innovation & Regional Research

- Form a preparatory working group for a regional clinical research network (AMSTRO-RCTN) to define scope, ethics, and regulatory alignment.
- Establish an AMSTRO Journal Working Group to assess editorial scope and feasibility (1-year goal), advancing toward launch of an AMSTRO journal (3-year goal).

## GOAL 5: Strengthen Leadership and Governance for Sustainable Cancer Care

- Cultivate leadership and professional development opportunities for early- and mid-career radiation oncologists, physicists, and therapists.
- Promote youth engagement and early-career leadership across education, research, and innovation initiatives.

## PARTNERSHIPS ALREADY UNDERWAY

### ESTRO

- Establish an MoU
- Develop training programs for RTTs
- Explore onsite courses in the AMSTRO region or online programs of interest

### GLOBAL HEALTH CATALYST (GHC)

- Signed MoU to develop various programs of common interest

### MEFOMP

- Signed MoU to develop various programs of common interest

### AAPM

- Develop an MoU between AMSTRO and AAPM
- Invited AMSTRO to the International Roundtable of Medical Physics Organizations.
- Work on capacity building.
- Encouraging AMSTRO-region Medical Physics PhD students and mentors to partner with AAPM mentors and students

MEETING AT A GLANCE

DAY 1 HIGHLIGHTS



Bringing together distinguished experts and advocates from across the globe, this moment captured the spirit of collaboration at the heart of AMSTRO. United by a common purpose, participants reaffirmed their commitment to advancing excellence and equitable access to cancer care worldwide.



Her Royal Highness Princess Dina Mired receives a warm welcome during the AMSTRO inaugural session, marking the beginning of a landmark gathering of oncology professionals. The occasion celebrated a shared vision of strengthening cancer care through leadership, innovation, and regional collaboration.

DAY 1 HIGHLIGHTS



In her keynote address, “Cancer Control Beyond Clinics: The Power of Policy, Advocacy, and Political Will,” Her Excellency Dr. Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu, President-Elect of the UICC, emphasized the critical role of leadership and advocacy in transforming cancer care. Her thought-provoking insights reinforced the importance of collective action to drive equitable and sustainable improvements in oncology worldwide.



DAY 1 HIGHLIGHTS



Dr. Abdalla Abdulaziz Alnajjar Alhammadi, President, Arab Science and Technology Foundation



## DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS

AMSTRO Signs Memorandum of Understanding with Global Health Catalyst (GHC) and Middle East Federation of Organizations for Medical Physics (MEFOMP). These partnerships marks an important step toward strengthening collaboration in medical physics, radiation oncology, education, research, and professional development across the region and globally. Through these MoU, both organizations aim to promote scientific exchange, joint educational initiatives, and opportunities for multidisciplinary cooperation that will ultimately enhance patient care and advance cancer treatment services.



DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS



The Hospital CEO Panel Discussion



Delegates gathered around the AMSTRO poster displays to explore emerging research, discuss findings, and share experiences from diverse clinical settings. The poster sessions encouraged collaboration, critical appraisal, and the dissemination of new knowledge across the oncology community.

DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS

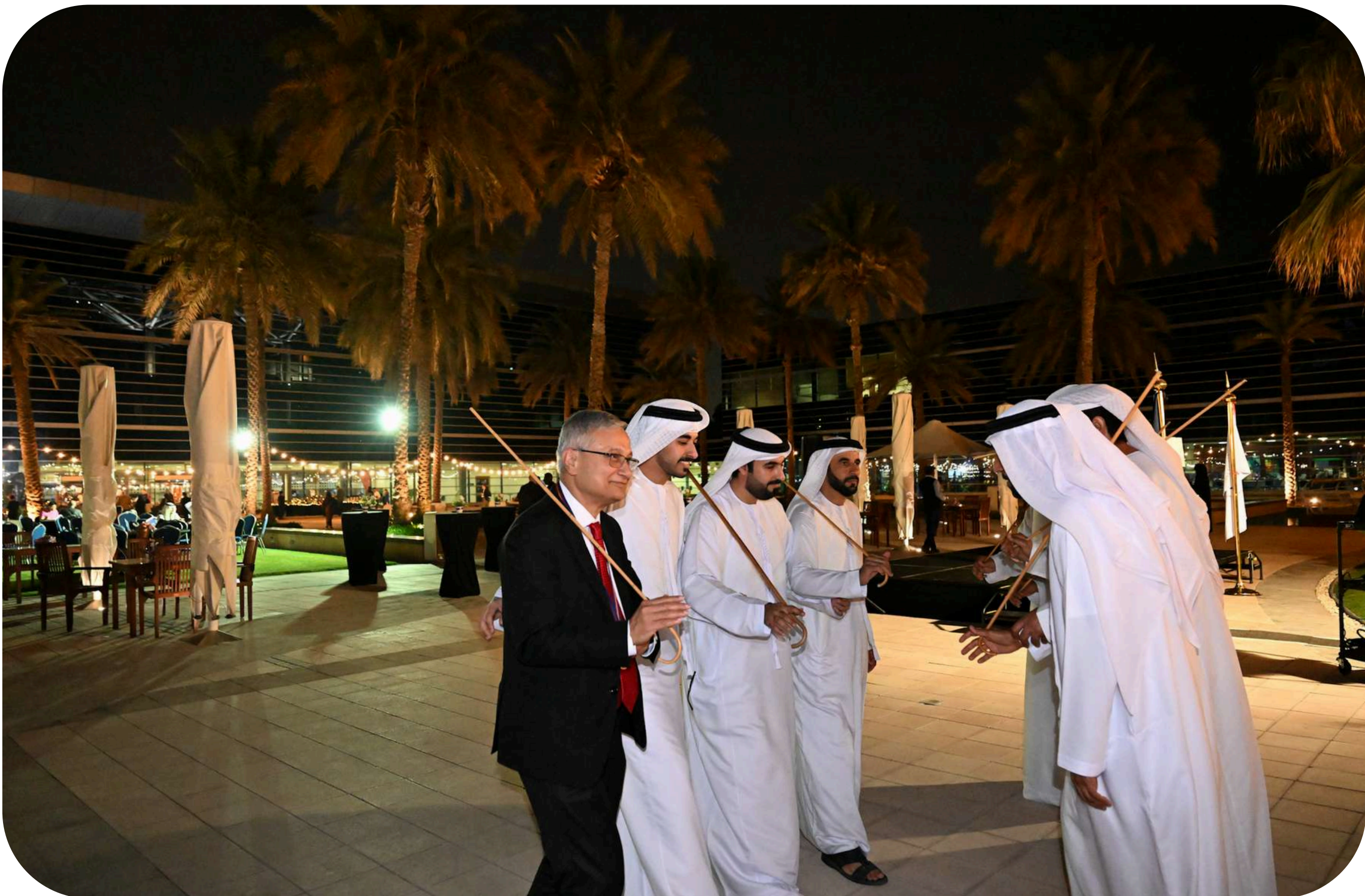


Building bridges across continents, leaders from AMSTRO, ESTRO, and Global Health Catalyst explored future avenues for collaboration in oncology. The meeting highlighted a shared vision of advancing cancer care through education, innovation, and international partnership.



Dr. Anoud Alnsour presenting “The Role of SBRT in Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC).”

DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS



Against the backdrop of Emirati hospitality, delegates gathered for an evening of networking and cultural appreciation. The social program provided a unique opportunity to strengthen professional relationships and build collaborations that extend well beyond the conference halls.



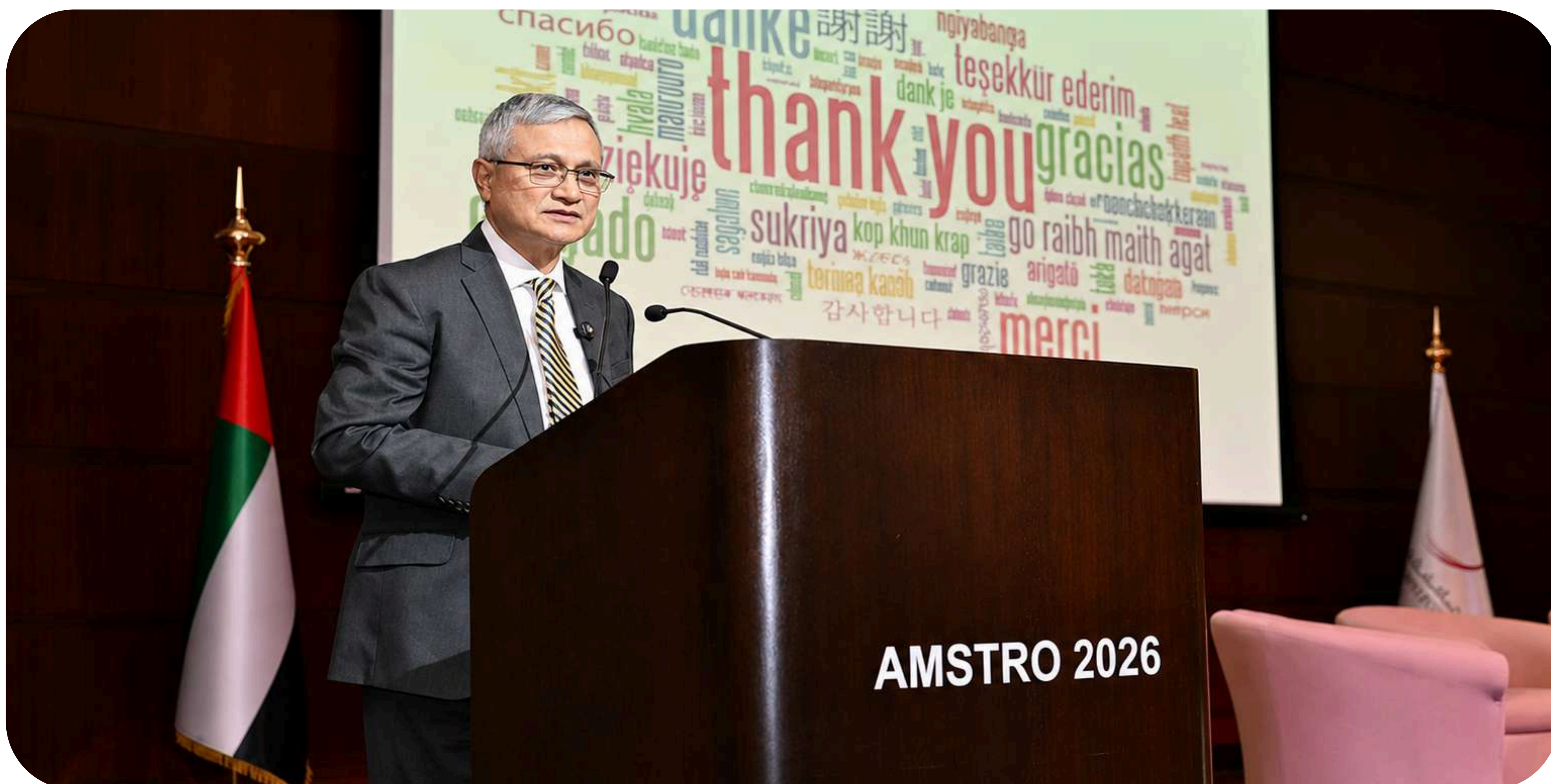
DAY 3 HIGHLIGHTS



DAY 3 HIGHLIGHTS



## DAY 3 HIGHLIGHTS



AMSTRO 2026 brought together an inspiring community of clinicians, researchers, educators, trainees, patient advocates, and industry partners united by a common goal, advancing equitable cancer care. This group photograph captures the collaborative spirit, diversity, and collective commitment that defined the inaugural AMSTRO meeting.

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of:

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- Bayan Medical
- Precimed

## AMSTRO Is Only as Strong as Its Members

### JOIN

Become an AMSTRO member and connect with colleagues across Asia and the Middle East shaping the future of cancer care.

### CONTRIBUTE

Have a case report, research abstract, or opinion piece? Submit content for AMSTRO Newsletter, Volume 1, Issue 2.

### PARTICIPATE

Get involved in the AMSTRO School, the AMSTRO-RCTN research network, or an AMSTRO committee or working group.

SEE YOU IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Volume 1, Issue 2 — coming soon

SUBMISSIONS & CONTACT

AMSTRO Newsletter welcomes case reports, research abstracts, opinion pieces, and trainee perspectives from across the region.  
To contribute to Volume 1, Issue 2, contact the Editorial Team: Dr. Kevin Martell & Dr. Mariam Hina.