FARO Newsletter

Federation of Asian organizations for Radiation Oncology

WINTER ISSUE

January 2024

- Highlights of 6th FARO meeting in Seoul,Korea
- Meet the new president of FARO
- AROI and its academic activities
- Three latest proton centers in Asia
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Message from the President

I am truly honored to take on the role as the President of the Federation of Asian Organizations for Radiation Oncology (FARO), a role to which I was appointed in January 2024. Founded in 2014 with the mission of fostering the practice of radiation oncology for the benefit of the cancer patients in this region. Today, our organization has expanded to 14 radiation oncology societies in Asia. We will continue to promote excellence in radiotherapy and provide education along with reinforcing research capacity in this field.

Together with the executive board and the 4 committee chairs (research, leadership development program, education & training, and scientific), I will work hard to make FARO one of the leading organizations in radiation oncology. With the support of the council members in 14 countries and collaborative partners, we can continue to grow our organization for the next generations of radiation oncologists and allied health professionals. Thank you very much. I am eager to work and walk together with you all.

Imjai Chitapanarux
President of FARO

6th FARO Meeting
FARO Together Toward Tomorrow

by Angel Kwan Khor Nee

The 6th FARO meeting took place on October 11-13, 2023, at the K Hotel in Seoul, Korea, at the scientific collaboration of the Korean Society for Radiation Oncology (KOSRO), the country host of the FARO meeting. The theme of the FARO & KOSRO 2023 meeting was "FARO together Toward Tomorrow". The KOSRO 41st Annual Meeting was held at the same time as the 6th FARO meeting.

The FARO & KOSRO 2023 organizing committee, led by the President of KOSRO Prof. Hong-Gyun Wu, hosted the event and allowed the members of FARO from 14 different societies representing each of the Asian countries to physically meet “together” post-pandemic.

Participation

There was a total of 663 participants included 43 invited speakers from 23 countries with 354 (53.4%) from Korea alone. India and China had 50 and 43 respectively followed by Japan (41), Philippines (38), Indonesia (35) and Thailand (34). Malaysia registered 15, while Bangladesh had 13. The remaining participants came from the Myanmar (6), Mongolia (4), Pakistan (4), Taiwan (4), Singapore (3), Sri Lanka (2), Vietnam (2) and Hong Kong (2). Among invited speakers, 13 came from United States of America, France, Canada, Belgium & Germany.

Program

On Day 1, the event kicked off with full day events of the Leadership Development Program (LDP), simultaneously meetings of the FARO officers and then the FARO council members. In the afternoon, the symposium focused on topics such as Carbon ion therapy, gynaecological cancer, and FARO research network (FERN) updates.

On Day 2, the opening ceremony featured keynote speeches from Prof. Hong-Gyun Wu, KOSRO president and Prof. Xian-shu Gao, FARO president with the discussion highlight being current radiotherapy issues in Asia. During the clinical tracks, the participants discussed topics such as head and neck cancer, thorax and central nervous system cancer, oligometastases treatment, optimal combination of RT with immune checkpoint blockade, and particle therapy.

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Program

On Day 3, lectures were given on the topics of genitourinary cancer, gynaecological cancer, gastrointestinal cancer, basic radiation biology & physics updates as well as the advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) in radiation therapy.

Abstract Submission & List of Awardees

The total number of abstract submissions received from FARO & KOSRO 2023 was 392, with 266 abstracts for FARO, 65 for oral presentations and 201 for poster presentations, while 126 abstracts for KOSRO, 39 for oral presentations and 87 for poster presentations.

The poster presentations abstracts were featured with the 10 best posters from Reena Engineer, Jingnan Wang, Qiyao Yang, Hyeon Seok Choi, Mark Dumago, Mohammad Saiful Islam Pathan, Kitwadee Saksornchai, Masatoshi Nakamura, Ying Ying Sum and Riyan Apriantoni.

The oral presentations held throughout the day 2 and 3 in various halls during the symposium. Top six presenters were: Chan Woo Wee, Yun Bai, Shu-Jung Hsu, Won Kyung Cho, Atsuto Katano and Xue Li.

Five top Young Investigators that received awards were: Weiping Wang, Mingwei Ma, Seung Hyuck Jeon, Song Jun Yeong and Bandaru Shrinivas Reddy.

There were 11 travel grant awards given to Tae Hoon Lee, Zekun Wang, Farah Mardhiah Janudin, Nowshin Taslima Hossain, Rhandyka Rafli, Vrushab Rao, Megumi Uto, Lori Belle Lofranco, Warissara Rongthong, Suryakanta Acharya and Ghazala Wajid.

Award & Closing Ceremony

The meeting concluded with the general assembly for the FARO members, followed by an award ceremony and the closing ceremony.

Closing Remarks

The 7th annual FARO meeting will take place in 2025 at the Chiang Mai in Thailand.

FARO 2025

Reflecting on a Collaborative Journey in Radiation Oncology

Department of Radiation Oncology, Peking University First Hospital

by Mingwei Ma

The Journey Begins

Situated in the historic center of Beijing, the Peking University First Hospital stands as a testament to medical dedication and excellence. Within this esteemed institution, our Radiation Oncology department annually manages the complex care of 2,700 patients, including a significant focus on urological cancers.

Young Investigator FARO 2023

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A Path of Continuous Learning

I have been fortunate to journey through a career enriched by both challenges and learnings. My time as a resident physician at the National Cancer Center was invaluable, laying a foundation for my return to Peking University First Hospital, where I have been humbly recognized as an outstanding young physician.

Collaborative Efforts in the Department

As the secretary of our department at Peking University First Hospital, I am deeply honored to contribute to important decision-making processes and to assist in the organization of significant events. My experience in organizing various national radiation oncology conferences has been both challenging and enriching. A highlight of my organizational journey was the successful coordination of the 2019 FARO Conference held in Shenzhen, China. This prestigious event brought together scholars from 14 different countries, fostering an international exchange of knowledge and expertise in the field of radiation oncology. These opportunities have not only allowed me to contribute significantly to our department but have also been invaluable in deepening my understanding of teamwork, leadership, and the global radiation oncology community.

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Research: Leadership and Collaboration

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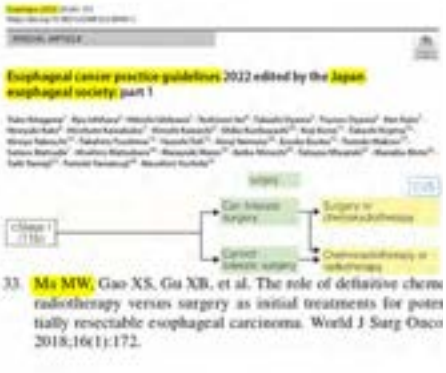
Executive Summary of the American Radium Society Appropriate Use Criteria for Operable Esophageal and Gastroesophageal Junction Adenocarcinoma: Systematic Review and Guidelines

The role of definitive chemoradiotherapy versus surgery as initial treatments for potentially resectable esophageal carcinoma

In my role as the team leader, I guided our research group in presenting groundbreaking work in radiation therapy for prostate and kidney cancer, resulting in two ORAL presentations and one POSTER selection. I published 11 papers in SCI-indexed journals and I have spearheaded several research projects, including two critical Beijing municipal projects and two major initiatives at Peking University.

One of our landmark studies, which I led, focused on comparing surgery with radiation and chemotherapy as initial treatment options for esophageal cancer. This research has achieved international acclaim, being cited in the 2021 American Society for Radiation Oncology guidelines and the 2022 Japanese Esophageal Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment guidelines.


Esophageal cancer practice guidelines 2022 edited by the Japan esophageal society: part 1

33. Ma MW, Gao XS, Gu XB, et al. The role of definitive chemo radiotherapy versus surgery as initial treatments for poten tially resectable esophageal carcinoma. World J Surg Onco 2018;16(1):172.

Beyond the Clinical World

My interest goes beyond clinical and research work; I'm passionate about singing and dancing.

I enjoy leading our team in dance performances, particularly during the hospital's Lunar New Year gala. These cultural activities not only bring joy but also strengthen our team spirit.

Reflecting on Strengths and Learning Opportunities

In my professional journey, I pride myself on having a meticulous attention to detail and a methodical approach to challenges. My ability to analyze and resolve complex problems has been a cornerstone of my success. However, I am keenly aware of the areas where I can grow further. Enhancing my verbal communication skills, especially in spontaneous situations, remains a priority for me. I also recognize the importance of staying focused during discussions and am actively working to sharpen this skill. Improving my proficiency in English for more effective international communication is another key area I am committed to developing. I believe that acknowledging and addressing these aspects will not only aid my personal growth but also contribute positively to my professional capabilities.

HYBRID LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Shaping Tomorrow's Leaders

by Rhandyka Rafli

Initiated in November 2017 in Bengaluru, India, the FARO Leadership Development Program (LDP) has swiftly become a cornerstone initiative for nurturing leadership within the field of radiation oncology in Asia. The 2023 iteration – the 4th batch of this esteemed program – symbolizes the continuing commitment of FARO to empower new leaders in this vital medical field.

Evolution

Over the years, the LDP has evolved into a robust platform for emerging leaders in radiation oncology, enabling them to connect, learn, and grow. The diversity of the 4th batch, with its 15 participants representing 14 different countries, is a testament to the program's expansive reach and impact. These countries include Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, and China, each bringing unique perspectives and experiences to the program.

Experience

The journey for the 2023 batch commenced on August 12, 2023, with a series of enlightening online sessions, laying the groundwork for the more intensive offline training in Seoul. The offline sessions at The-K Hotel, Seoul, from October 11-12, 2023, offered participants hands-on training and face-to-face interactions with leaders in the field. These sessions were meticulously crafted to blend theoretical knowledge with real-world leadership challenges and strategies.

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Culmination

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The LDP's offline session dovetailed seamlessly into the FARO 2023 meeting, providing a platform for participants to showcase their learning and engage with a wider community of experts. This meeting was not only a culmination of their months-long training but also an opportunity to network and set the stage for future collaborations.

Direction

A unique aspect of this batch is its division into three specialized project groups: Scientific Education, Research Development, and enhancing FARO's Visibility. These groups are tasked with specific projects that align with FARO's overarching goals and will continue their work over the year. The 'Scientific' group focuses on advancing research and knowledge dissemination. 'Collaborative Development' aims at fostering partnerships and alliances within the radiation oncology community. The 'Visibility' group is dedicated to amplifying FARO's presence and impact in the field.

FARO LDP Batch 4 reflects a growing and vibrant community of emerging leaders in radiation oncology across Asia. The program not only equips these professionals with essential leadership skills but also instills in them a sense of responsibility towards the collective advancement of their field. As these leaders forge ahead, they carry with them the knowledge, experiences, and networks to make meaningful contributions to radiation oncology.

New Friendships Formed

AROI and its Academic Activities

by Sayan Paul

The Association of Radiation Oncologists of India (AROI) has been playing a key role in the academic and professional development of the Radiation Oncology fraternity in India. The association organises various academic activities in the country under the aegis of AROI and ICRO (Indian College of Radiation Oncologists). ICRO is a teaching wing of the Association of Radiation Oncologists' of India.

AROI organises an annual academic conference called AROICON. It is three and a half-dayconference. On the first day, a workshop is conducted on the most recent advances in the field of radiation oncology. Various topics on Radiation Oncology and Clinical Oncology are discussed at this annual conference. Faculties and delegates from different parts of the country attend the conference and participate in academic discussions. AROI also invites many renowned international faculties frommany other countries to deliver their talks and present their research work in the field.

The Association gives fellowships to students and Practitioners to develop their clinical skills. This fellowship can be completed in Indian institutes as well as in institutes outside India.

The best paper award is given to students and young practitioners at the conference to encourage original research work in the field of radiation oncology, clinical oncology, translational research and medical physics. Original Research work can be presented asa poster or oral presentation. In the best paper award category , there are 3 layers of selection. From the submitted articles the eligible articles are selected for poster presentation. The posters are judged to select the best articles for oral presentation. Winners are selected from the presented articles and gold medals are awarded.

ICRO (Indian College of Radiation Oncologists) organises various teaching classes for students of Radiation Oncology and Young Practitioners who are practising for less than 10 years from the completion of their speciality training.

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ICRO organises teaching classes for postgraduate trainees at regular intervals on various topics. The entire Programme is a sponsored Programme and students are selected from radiation Oncologydepartments from various teaching institutes by their supervisors to attend the programme and learn basic and advanced Oncology. Various topics of Medical Physics and radiation technology are also taught in this Programme.

ICRO also organises Advanced Oncology teaching classes for practising Radiation Oncologists who have completed their Speciality Training within 10 years. In these classes, various topics on Clinical Oncology and Advanced Radiation Oncology are discussed.

These classes organised by ICRO have been divided into four zones considering the vastness of the country and the number of people willing to attend these classes. Each zone organises classes on the same topic so that Radiation oncologists from different parts of India can attend those classes.

A special radiobiology class is also organised by ICRO for postgraduate students and Young Radiation Oncologists. This class is also attended by a large number of students from various parts of the country.

The AROI is a central body, it also has branches in various states. These are called AROI State Chapters Each state or zones has their own AROI chapter. Each State Chapter organises various academic activities for its members. They organise annual conferences in which they invite faculties from India and abroad. These state chapters also conduct short academic events like 1 day or 2 days training programmes, and Continuous Medical Education Programmes. The state chapters provide fellowship to students and Practising oncologists to update their knowledge and skills from different institutions in and outside the country. They also give the best paper award to students and young Oncologists for presenting their original research work at the annual Conference. Quiz on Radiation Oncology is also conducted for students in different state chapter conferences to encourage Young students to learn and disseminate knowledge.

AROI has its own Oncology Journal called JCRT (Journal of Cancer Research and Therapeutics). This journal has a good impact factor and it is a renowned Medical Journal in the Radiation Oncology fraternity. AROI provide this Journal free of cost to all its members.

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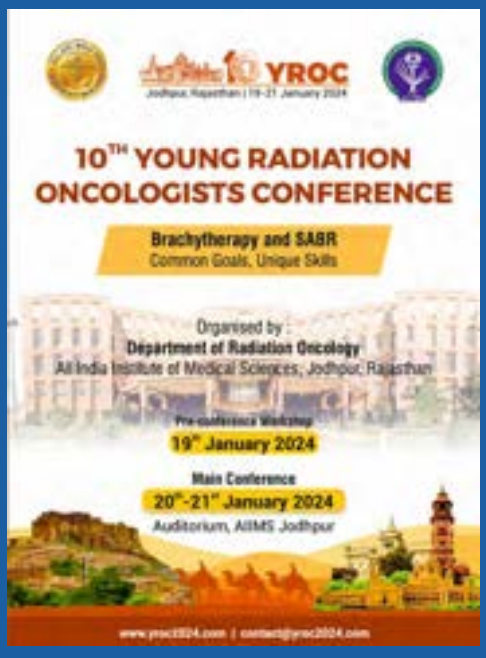
Association of Radiation Oncologists of India (AROI) is working continuously to propagate knowledge and develop skills in the field of radiation oncology for years. The central body and its branches work together to teach and train Radiation Oncologists in India in a collaborative approach. There is ample scope for the Exchange of ideas and knowledge amongst its members.

Especially for Young Radiation Oncologists a special conference called Young Radiation Oncologists'Conference or YROC is also conducted yearly with the patronage of the National Body AROI. This is a special platform for young radiation Oncologists so that they can also actively take part in teaching, academic discussions and training programmes as Faculty and delegates. In this conference, only Young Radiation Oncologists are invited as faculties.

Renowned young Radiation oncologists from other countries are also invited as faculties. This initiative of organising a separate academic meet for Young Oncologists was conceived to provide Young Radiation Oncologists with a separate arena to train themselves to become Experts in their field.



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AROI in collaboration with ESTRO organises ESTRO teaching courses in India. This event has faculties from both Europe and India and is conducted jointly by ESTRO and AROI. Three ESTRO courses are conducted every year, on advanced technology, Gynaecological malignancies and Head and Neck cancers.

AROI also organises "Best of ASTRO" in collaboration with ASTRO. The selected abstracts from that year's ASTRO conference are presented and discussed in this meeting.

AROI is continuously working on developing new teaching and training curriculums and methods. It influences the decision-makers and government bodies on subjects related to radiation oncology teaching in India, as well as on decisions which may affect the practice of radiation oncology in India.

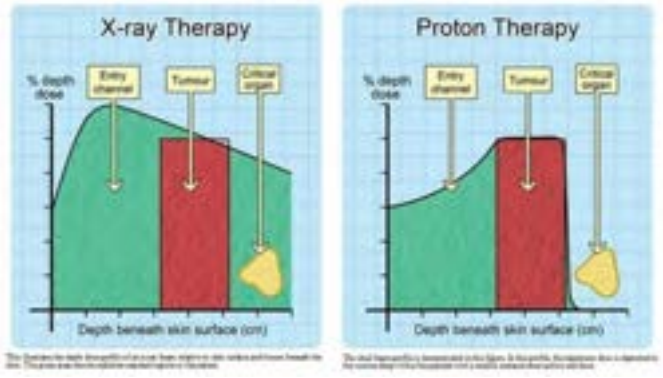
More Proton Centres in Singapore

by David Chia

Proton therapy has been utilized in Asia for more than 20 years, with countries such as Japan, South Korea, and China and Taiwan leading the way in proton therapy centres. However, Singapore is now set to join the ranks with the opening of 3 new proton centres - the government funded centre at new National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) with multiple gantries and two other centres in the private sector with single gantry will also offer proton beam therapy in 2023.

In a 2020 study published in JAMA oncology, Baumann et al. analyzed data from almost 1,500 adults with 11 different types of cancer. The study found that patients who received proton therapy experienced fewer serious side effects than those who received photon radiation, resulting in fewer unplanned hospitalisations. This benefit not withstanding, it is generally recognised that efficacy in terms of survival and local control rates are similar to photon treatment. Although much effort has surrounded the study of proton therapy in the most prevalent cancers worldwide such as prostate and breast cancer, it is not clear that proton therapy would provide a substantial benefit as these patients already have excellent cure rates and relatively few high-grade adverse effects.

On the other hand, patients with locally advanced disease often choose to accept highly toxic doses of chemotherapy and radiotherapy to maximize their probability of long-term disease control. Ultimately, the evidence needed to justify the expenses of proton therapy for patients undergoing chemoradiotherapy for locally advanced cancer will need to come from phase 3 randomized clinical trials. Several of such large trials such as PartiQoL, COMPPARE and others are underway and their findings are eagerly awaited. Neweriterations such as IMPT, hypofractionation and FLASH proton therapy also appear promising.



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With its advanced technology and precise targeting capabilities, proton therapy offers a new hope to cancer patients and their families. However, the current era of rising inflation and cost of living worldwide is a concern for all countries and Singapore is not spared. We all know that medical inflation hits the less privileged particularly hard. Government subsidies will continue to be a crucial element for proton access to be equitable across society. Paradoxically, insurance companies increasingly require more evidence to prove the value and cost-effectiveness of proton therapy before paying for it, yet often deny coverage for patients who are randomly assigned to proton therapy in clinical trials. Payers who demand more evidence should adequately support phase 3 trials.

In conclusion, the addition of three (3) new Proton Therapy Centres to Singapore's medical landscape is a significant milestone in the region's journey towards advanced cancer treatment. We will soon be joined by new proton centres in Thailand, Indonesia and surely many more in the region. With the promise of reduced side effects and more targeted treatment, proton therapy will hopefully be accessible to many cancer patients. As Singapore continues to invest in state-of-the-art medical facilities and technologies, we continue to learn from our more advanced colleagues overseas and look forward to a brighter future for cancer treatment in Asia.

Malaysian Oncological Society

Society Highlight

MOS was formed in 1976 to promote and advance the practice of oncology in Malaysia.
Approximately 230 members from various disciplines from government, university and private sectors. Majority are clinical oncologists and oncology trainees.
Main activities are organizing oncology meetings, conferences and workshops to disseminate and promote evidence based oncology among members, support research in cancer in Malaysia and to collaborate with other societies and organizations to raise cancer awareness among the public.

Regions in Malaysia and Location of Cancer Centres

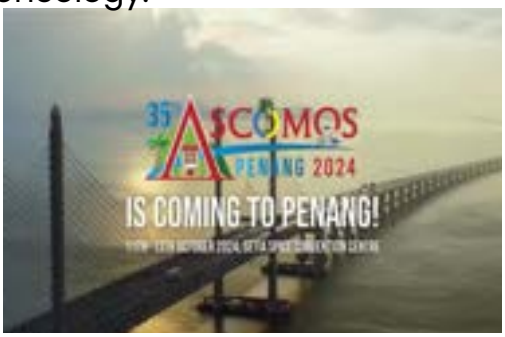
West Malaysia		
Region	State	Centre
North	Perlis	0
	Kedah	1
	Penang	9
	Perak	4
Central	W.P Kuala Lumpur	12
	W.P Putrajaya	1
	Selangor	11
South	Negeri Sembilan	1
	Malacca	2
	Johor	4
East Coast	Kelantan	1
	Terengganu	0
	Pahang	1

Malaysia		
Population	Area	Centre
33.4 million	330,803 km2	54

East Malaysia		
Region	State	Centre
East Malaysia	Sarawak	4
	Sabah	3
	W.P Labuan	0

Main Event

The 'Annual Scientific Congress of the Malaysian Oncological Society' (ASCOMOS)
is the main event organised by MOS to showcase the latest developments in the field of oncology.



Partnership

MOS also work in partnership with international cancer societies: UICC, SEAROG, FARO, IAEA and ESMO.

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Follow our account:

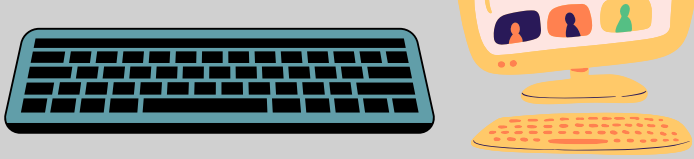
https://www.facebook.com/BeatCancer.MOS https://www.instagram.com/beatcancer.mos/

FARO Webinar Series

The 26th FARO hybrid webinar on the "Updated Management in Glioma Grade 2-3" organized by THASTRO was held successfully on the 11th of November 2023 with a record number of 439 participants.

Assistant Professor William Breen from Mayo Clinic discussed the modern classification, classic treatment paradigms, recent updates and the future directions in the management of low- and high-grade gliomas.

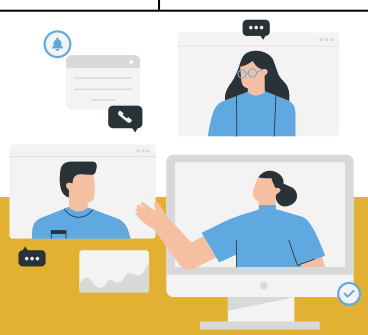
The 5th FARO- Varian webinar was held on 11th December 2023 on the topic "Brachytherapy Contouring for Gynaecologic Malignancies: Guidelines and Practical Recommendations". Dr Harjot Kaur Bajwa from the American Oncology Institute, India offered practical advice on brachytherapy contouring for gynaecological cancers including cervical and endometrial cancers.



Missed out on participating? View the recording at http://faro.asia/page2_3.html

List of Upcoming Events

EVENTS	DATE	VENUE	HOMEPAGE
FARO Webinar Series	Monthly	**Virtual Event**	**http://faro.asia/**
	28 Feb 2024		Hosted by Elekta
	27 March 2024		Hosted by SRS
	24 April 2024		Hosted by Varian
	22 May 2024		Hosted by BSRO (IROS support)
	26 June 2024		Hosted by Accuray
	24 July 2024		Hosted by MOSTRO
10th Annual Young Radiation Oncologists Conference (YROC)	19 to 21 January 2024	Auditorium, AIIMS Jodhpur, India	http://yroc2024.com
RAJ-AROICON 2024	23 to 25 February 2024	Rajasthan International Center (RIC), Jaipur, India	https://bio.link/rajaroi
25 Annual Cancer Congress ONCO-2024	1 to 3 March 2024	Serena Hotel, Islamabad Pakistan	www.psco.com.pk
12th Asia-Pacific Breast Cancer Summit	1 to 3 March 2024	Nusa Dua Convention Centre, Bali, Indonesia	https://apbcs.org
7th AROI-ESTRO Teaching Course on Gynaecological Cancer	14 to 17 March 2024	IUCTE, India	https://aroiestrogyn2024.com/
62nd Annual PTCOG Conference	10 to 15 June 2024	Singapore	https://ptcog62.org/
FARO-ESTRO Congress @ ESTRO meets Asia 2024	23 to 25 August 2024	Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre,Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	https://www.estro.org/Congresses/Estro-meets-Asia-2024



FARO
MEMBERS ORGANIZATIONS

Bangladesh Society of Radiation Oncologists (BSRO)
http://www.bsro.info

Chinese Society of Therapeutic Radiation Oncology (CSTRO)
http://www.csro.org/

Association of Radiation Oncologists of India (AROI)
https://www.aroiwb.org

Indonesian Radiation Oncology Society (IROS)
http://www.pori.or.id

Japanese society for Radiation Oncology (JASTRO)
https://www.jastro.or.jp/en/

Korean Society for Radiation Oncology (KOSRO)
http://eng.kosro.or.kr

Malaysian Oncological Society (MOS)
https://www.malaysiaoncology.org

Mongolian society for Radiation Oncology (MOSTRO)

Myanmar society for Radiation Oncology (MSTRO)
https://www.mmacentral.org/societies/myanmar-society-for-radiotherapy-oncology/

Pakistan Society of Clinical Oncology (PSCO)
http://psco.com.pk/

Philippines Radiation Oncology Society (PROS)
https://pros.org.ph

Singapore Radiological Society (SRS)
https://srs.org.sg

Sri Lanka College of Oncologists (SLCO)
http://www.slco.lk

Thai Association of Radiation Oncology (THASTRO)
https://www.thastro.org/en/

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ACCURAY

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2023 FARO Leadership Development Program