Title: Development and validation of a population-based anatomical colorectal model for radiation dosimetry in late effects studies of childhood cancer survivors

CA Owens<sup>1,2</sup>*, B Rigaud<sup>3</sup>, E Ludmir<sup>4,5</sup>, A Gupta<sup>1,2</sup>, S Shrestha<sup>1,2</sup>, AC Paulino<sup>4</sup>, SA Smith<sup>1</sup>, CB Peterson<sup>5</sup>, SF Kry<sup>1,2</sup>, C Lee<sup>6</sup>, T Henderson<sup>7</sup>, GT Armstrong<sup>8</sup>, KK Brock<sup>1,3</sup>, RM Howell<sup>1,2</sup>, (1) The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Department of Radiation Physics, Houston, TX, USA, (2) MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Graduate Program in Medical Physics, Houston, TX USA, (3) The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Department of Imaging Physics, Houston, TX, USA, (4) The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Department of Radiation Oncology, Houston, TX, USA, (5) The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Department of Biostatistics, Houston, TX, USA, (6) National Cancer Institute, Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics, Bethesda, MD, USA, (7) The University of Chicago, Department of Pediatrics, Chicago, IL, USA, (8) St. Jude Childrens Research Hospital, Department of Epidemiology and Cancer Control, Memphis, TN, USA

Purpose:
Study purposes were to develop and integrate a colorectal model that incorporates anatomical variations of pediatric patients into an age-scalable computational phantom, and to validate the model for pediatric radiation therapy (RT) dose reconstructions.

Methods:
Colorectal contours were manually derived by two physicians from whole-body non-contrast CT scans of 114 pediatric patients (age range: 2.1-21.6 years, 74 males, 40 females). One contour was used for an anatomical template, 103 for training and 10 for testing. Training contours were used to create a colorectal principal component analysis (PCA)-based statistical shape model (SSM) to extract the population’s dominant deformations. The SSM was integrated into our in-house age-scalable phantom. Geometric accuracy was assessed between patient-specific and SSM reconstructed contours. Two alternative colorectal shapes (hereafter alternative #1, #2) were generated using the first 17 dominant SSM modes. Dosimetric accuracy was assessed by comparing colorectal doses from 10 test patients’ CT-based RT plans (ground-truth) with reconstructed doses for the mean, alternative #1 and #2 colorectal models in age-matched phantoms. Lastly, a proof-of-concept study was conducted to demonstrate that our colorectal models can be integrated into any computational phantom.

Results:
Using all 103 PCA modes, mean(min-max) Dice similarity coefficient, distance-to-agreement and Hausdorff distance between patient-specific and reconstructed contours were 0.89(0.85-0.91), 2.1mm(1.7-3.0), and 8.6mm(5.7-14.3), respectively. Average absolute difference between ground-truth and reconstructed mean and maximum colorectal doses (normalized to 20Gy prescription dose) for the mean colorectal model (alternative #1, alternative #2) were 6.33%(8.08%, 6.13%) and 4.38%(4.28%, 4.65%), respectively. Similar agreement was observed when colorectal models were integrated into a collaborator’s 5-year-old phantom; 6.28%(11.73%, 0.34%) and 0.47%(0.19%, 0.90%), respectively.

Conclusion:
We developed and validated a population-based colorectal SSM and demonstrated its use for pediatric RT dose reconstruction in two phantoms. We will use this SSM to reconstruct pre-CT era colorectal doses for irradiated individuals in the Childhood Cancer Survivor Study.
BACKGROUND:

- For colorectal subsequent malignant neoplasms (SMN) in childhood cancer survivors, the risk factor known to confer the highest risk is exposure to radiation therapy (RT).
- Childhood cancer survivor cohorts with long-term follow-up and colorectal outcome data include individuals treated in the pre-Computed Tomography (CT) era of RT for which colorectal doses must be reconstructed.
- Computational phantoms used for RT dose reconstruction in radiation late-effects studies of childhood cancer survivors, to date, have organ models based on anatomy of a single patient.
- Since the colorectum is highly variable in shape between patients, we developed an “average” colorectal model that incorporates anatomical variations from a population of pediatric patients.

INNOVATION/IMPACT:

- Unlike in other late effects computational phantoms, our colorectal statistical shape model (SSM):
  - Can be integrated into any computational phantom for RT dose reconstruction (Fig. 1A)
  - Incorporates anatomical variations of 114 unique pediatric patients (Fig. 2); typically, organ models are based on a single patient’s organ typology
  - Can be scaled to any age at RT (Fig. 2F); other approaches are confined to a specific set of ages
  - Can generate alternative colorectal models to simulate different possible colorectal shapes (Fig. 2G)
- This is the first study to report inter-patient alignment of the colon-sigmoid-rectum (Fig. 2C)
- Our PCA-based SSM (Fig. 2D) reconstructed 10 test contours with mean Dice coefficient and distance-to-agreement of 0.89 and 2.1mm. Considering the complexity of the colon, these are great results.
- In the field of retrospective RT dosimetry (where higher dose uncertainties are observed):
  - Our results (Fig. 3A and 3D) are comparable to what is observed in retrospective cardiac RT dosimetry (Ntentas et al. Radiother. Oncol. 2020).
- Our colorectal model will enable:
  - Colorectal dosimetry for 12,000+ childhood cancer survivors who were treated in the pre-CT era of RT
  - Investigation of the relationship between colorectal RT dose metrics (e.g., RT mean colorectal dose) and colorectal SMN risk to develop dose-response models; current studies are limited to prescribed dose or body region dosimetry which have more uncertainties than organ-specific doses (Fig. 3D)
  - Alternative colorectal models (Fig. 2G) will be used for sensitivity analysis to see how different colorectal shapes affect dose-response models

CLINICAL IMPACT:

- Incorporation of colon-specific RT dosimetry will establish meaningful dose-response models to [1] better inform survivorship care plans and [2] define colon/substructure RT dose constraints for RT planning
- These post-treatment and a priori planning strategies could reduce morbidity and mortality from colorectal subsequent malignant neoplasms (SMNs) in childhood cancer survivors (Daniel et al. Cancer. 2015).

A.) Colorectal models

B.) Left-sided flank field

![Fig 1. Proof-of-concept experiment. (A) Our in-house colorectal models were age-scaled to 5 years. The scaled models were registered with the collaborator’s 5-year-old male phantom. Left- and right-sided Wilms’ tumor radiation therapy (RT) plans were simulated on the CT scan of a 5-year-old male and on the collaborator’s phantom. (B) Several RT dose metrics are reported in the table for left-sided RT plans. We repeated step (A) for 10 test patients and calculated the absolute difference between the patient (ground-truth) value and each model’s value for each RT dose metric. A Wilcoxon signed-rank test was performed to compare the absolute difference in RT dose values from each of our colorectal models with the values from the collaborator’s colorectal model; asterisks in table indicate statistical significance (p<0.05).]
Fig 2. Workflow of colorectal model (A-D) development and (E-I) integration. (A) Each contour was pre-processed, and an anatomical template was selected. (B) Contours were spatially normalized. (C) Next, contours were registered to the anatomical template, selected in step A, using a deformable registration method, specifically the constrained symmetric thin-plate spline robust point matching (sTPS-RPM) method. (D) Deformed contours were used to create a principal component analysis (PCA)-based colorectal statistical shape model (SSM) to extract the dominant deformation modes of the population; shown is the 1st PCA mode. (E) The SSM was registered to an in-house phantom and (F) was integrated with the phantom’s age-based scaling functions. (G) Next, two alternative colorectal models (alternative #1 and #2) were generated using the SSM. (H) The three colorectal models from step G were analyzed dosimetrically and compared with patient-specific CT-based dosimetric data. (I) Future work includes delineating colorectal substructures.

Fig 3. (A) The difference in mean dose (prescription normalized) is within 10% for most test patients for left-sided flank field RT plans. (B) Colorectum contour for a patient (2.9-year-old female) for whom the dose difference was greater than 10% due to atypically enlarged transverse colon due to gas/constipation. (C) Colorectum contour for a patient (14.5-year-old male) with a more typical shaped colorectum for whom dose differences for all models were within ±10%. (D) The table compares prescription dose (a commonly used RT dose surrogate in late effects studies) with the patient CT-based dose and the colorectal model-derived doses. Colorectal mean doses for the test cases ranged from 5.86 to 10.29Gy; If prescription doses were used for dose-response modeling, doses would be overestimated by 200% to 400%, which is much greater than the dose reconstruction uncertainty observed with our colorectal models.