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Real-Time Image-Guided Ablative Prostate Cancer Radiation Therapy: Results from the TROG 15.01 SPARK Trial

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## Real-Time Image-Guided Ablative Prostate Cancer Radiation Therapy:

### Results from the TROG 15.01 SPARK Trial

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35 **Running Title**

36 Real-time IGRT improves radiation dose accuracy

37 **Conflict of Interest Notification**

38 Related to the SPARK trial, PK and PP are inventors of a KIM-related patent that has been licensed to Varian

39 Medical Systems by Stanford University and PK is an inventor of an MLC tracking patent licensed to Leo

40 Cancer Care by the University of Sydney. PK, DTN, RO and PP are inventors of additional unlicensed patents.

41 PK founded Leo Cancer Care but has no ownership interest. PP has a research agreement with Varian Medical

42 Systems through Aarhus University. JB reports a research agreement with Varian Medical Systems allowing

43 RNSH to utilise MLC tracking and KIM for clinical application of the SPARK protocol. NH has had travel

44 expenses paid by Varian Medical Systems for MLC tracking in lung. All other authors declare no competing

45 interests.

46

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50

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**63 Abstract****64 Purpose**

65 Kilovoltage Intrafraction Monitoring (KIM) is a novel software platform implemented on  
66 standard radiation therapy systems enabling real-time image-guided radiation therapy  
67 (IGRT). In a multi-institutional prospective trial, we investigated whether real-time IGRT  
68 improved the accuracy of the dose prostate cancer patients received during radiation therapy.

**69 Methods and Materials**

70 Forty-eight patients with prostate cancer were treated with KIM-guided Stereotactic Ablative  
71 Radiation Therapy (SABR) with 36.25 Gy in five fractions. During KIM-guided treatment  
72 the prostate motion was corrected for by either beam gating with couch shifts or multileaf  
73 collimator tracking. A dose reconstruction method was used to evaluate the dose delivered to  
74 the target and organs at risk with and without real-time IGRT. Primary outcome was the  
75 effect of real-time IGRT on dose distributions. Secondary outcomes included patient-reported  
76 outcomes and toxicity.

**77 Results**

78 Motion correction occurred in  $\geq 1$  treatment for 88% of patients (42/48) and 51% of  
79 treatments (121/235). With real-time IGRT, no treatments had prostate CTV D98% dose 5%  
80 less than planned. Without real-time IGRT, 13 treatments (5.5%) had prostate CTV D98%  
81 doses 5% less than planned. The prostate CTV D98% dose with real-time IGRT was closer to  
82 the plan by an average of 1.0% (range -2.8% to 20.3%). Patient outcomes show no change in  
83 the 12-month patient reported outcomes compared with baseline and no grade  $\geq 3$  GU or GI  
84 toxicities.

**85 Conclusion**

86 Real-time IGRT is clinically effective for prostate cancer SABR.

87

88 Keywords: Prostate cancer; real-time image-guided radiation therapy; stereotactic ablative

89 radiation therapy

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## 91 **Introduction**

92 Radiation therapy is an effective treatment option in the management of prostate cancer.<sup>1</sup>

93 Accurate delivery of radiation dose is of fundamental importance in radiation oncology.

94 Technical advances in radiation therapy technology have improved cancer treatment

95 outcomes. These advances are evident for prostate cancer where image-guided radiation

96 therapy (IGRT) and intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) have independently

97 demonstrated improved tumor control and lower rates of late rectal toxicity.<sup>2-6</sup> However,

98 prostate motion during radiation therapy may shift the tumor outside the beam,

99 simultaneously reducing target dose and exposing normal tissues to increased radiation doses.

100 The deleterious effects of motion for prostate cancer has led the American Society for

101 Radiation Oncology to recommend '*A precise ability to localize the target tumor is essential*

102 *to fully benefit from stereotactic body radiation therapy techniques*'.<sup>7</sup> As the duration of

103 prostate radiation therapy is compressed initially from around 40 treatments, to closer to 20,

104 and more recently down towards five or fewer treatments, the importance of accurate

105 treatment grows.<sup>8-10</sup> Clinical trials seeking to validate stereotactic ablative radiation therapy

106 (SABR) approaches are underway.<sup>11</sup>

107

108 Correction for interfraction motion has become standard of care, but management of

109 intrafraction motion is not widely used despite evidence of prostate movement even over the

110 few minutes which treatment takes.<sup>12</sup> Real-time IGRT, where the cancer target position is

111 continuously monitored during treatment, was clinically pioneered over 20 years ago.<sup>13</sup>

112 Prostate cancer patients treated with real-time IGRT showed significantly lower bowel

113 morbidity and improved health-related quality of life than a comparator cohort treated

114 without real-time IGRT.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, prostate cancer patients treated with real-time IGRT had

115 superior target dose coverage compared to if they had been treated without real-time  
116 IGRT.<sup>15,16</sup>

117

118 Several commercially available technologies have been developed to perform real-time  
119 IGRT<sup>17</sup> but require extra hardware and/or per patient expendables. To improve widespread  
120 access, real-time IGRT would ideally be performed using the equipment that already exists  
121 on standard linear accelerators (linacs). A review of real-time IGRT on standard-equipped  
122 cancer radiation therapy systems identified three clinically applied technologies for prostate  
123 and liver cancer SABR patients with further methods under development that could be  
124 clinically used for real-time IGRT.<sup>17</sup> More recently real-time IGRT for spinal SABR was  
125 implemented on a standard linac.<sup>18</sup> Together these advances demonstrate a trajectory of real-  
126 time IGRT becoming more widely available for patients receiving SABR.

127

128 One of these clinically applied technologies, Kilovoltage Intrafraction Monitoring (KIM), the  
129 technology under investigation in this trial, uses the existing x-ray system to measure the  
130 target translation and rotation during radiation therapy.<sup>19</sup> KIM is an in-house developed  
131 software-based medical device. It is integrated into Elekta and Varian linacs using a computer  
132 connected to the linac to read the images and treatment data in real-time and give the target  
133 position and rotation measurements, along with the decision of whether a couch shift is  
134 needed when gating is used, or directly sending the target position measurements to the  
135 multileaf collimator (MLC) tracking system when this correction method is used. In an  
136 analysis of the accuracy and precision of the KIM system, the in-treatment measurements of  
137 44 patients were analysed using the kV and MV images acquired during treatment using  
138 triangulation. The centroid geometric accuracy and precision of the KIM system during the  
139 patient treatments was  $0.0 \pm 0.5$ ,  $0.0 \pm 0.4$  and  $0.1 \pm 0.3$  mm for translation, and  $-0.1 \pm 0.6^\circ$ , -

140  $0.1 \pm 1.4^\circ$  and  $-0.1 \pm 1.0^\circ$  for rotation in the AP, LR and SI directions respectively.<sup>20</sup> The  
141 measured latency is 350 ms.<sup>21</sup> When KIM is used with gating the correction workflow  
142 depends on the type of linac used. For Elekta Synergy and Varian Trilogy linacs, KIM  
143 computes the couch shift based on the last known prostate position, and the radiation  
144 therapists shift to the couch to the new coordinates. On Varian TrueBeam linacs, the system  
145 requires additional kV-kV imaging prior to implementing the shift. When KIM is used with  
146 MLC tracking KIM's 3D position is streamed to the MLC tracking program. This program  
147 combines the position information with the plan to adjust the MLC leaf positions to the  
148 moving target.<sup>19</sup> The promising findings of the use of KIM in a single institution pilot study  
149 (NCT01742403) stimulated the development of the multi-institutional Trans-Tasman  
150 Radiation Oncology Group (TROG) 15.01 Stereotactic Prostate Ablative Radiation Therapy  
151 with KIM (SPARK) trial (NCT02397317).<sup>22</sup>  
152  
153 In this study we investigated whether real-time IGRT improved the accuracy of the dose  
154 prostate cancer patients received during SABR.

## 155 **Methods and Materials**

### 156 *Trial design*

157 The SPARK trial was based on the KIM real-time IGRT method for treatments requiring  
158 correction for target motion, with the protocol published separately.<sup>22</sup> We considered a  
159 treatment with KIM-guided motion correction (real-time IGRT) a success if the estimated  
160 delivered patient dose distribution was closer to the planned values than the estimated dose  
161 distribution without real-time IGRT. The dose metric for reporting target doses in the  
162 presence of motion is not explicitly detailed in ICRU Report 83,<sup>23</sup> so the prostate dose values  
163 assessed were the dose to 98% (D98%) of the clinical target volume (CTV). The rectal and  
164 bladder doses were chosen to be the volume of the rectum receiving above 30 Gy (V30Gy).  
165 To put the results into context, a 5% dose difference between the planned dose and that  
166 delivered to the patient has long been considered clinically meaningful.<sup>24</sup>

167

168 The trial was approved by a human research ethics committee (HREC/15/HNE/216),  
169 prospectively registered and all patients provided written informed consent.

170

### 171 *Radiation treatment and dose assessment details*

172 All patients had three intraprostatic gold markers inserted. Patients were prescribed 36.25 Gy  
173 to the PTV in five treatments. Patients were treated with multi-arc VMAT with 6 MV or 10  
174 MV energy beams on Elekta Synergy, Varian Trilogy or Varian TrueBeam linacs with KIM  
175 implemented. Prior to each treatment the patient anatomy acquired with CBCT was aligned to  
176 the radiation beam via their gold markers. During treatment, the target motion was corrected  
177 in real-time by implementing either beam gating with couch shifts if motion exceeded 2-3  
178 mm motion thresholds for  $\geq 5$  seconds or MLC tracking.<sup>25</sup> The gating thresholds were chosen  
179 because of the CTV to PTV margin of 3 mm posteriorly and 5 mm in other directions. MLC

180 tracking has no correction threshold and any detected motion results in a beam shift. MLC  
181 tracking was only available at one institution for the study and was used to correct for motion  
182 for all 10 patients treated at that institution. The remaining 34 patients treated at four separate  
183 institutions used beam gating with couch shifts to correct for motion. For 44/48 patients the  
184 estimated dose distribution that was delivered to the patients with real-time IGRT was  
185 estimated by generating motion-encoded plans that mimicked prostate motion as multiple  
186 isocenter shifts and replaced the planned MLC positions with actual positions for MLC  
187 tracking.<sup>26</sup> The motion-encoded plans were recalculated by the treatment planning system on  
188 the planning CT scans. For the remaining four patients where a different treatment planning  
189 system was used, the dose reconstruction was performed by measuring the mean position of  
190 the target with respect to the isocenter for each treatment arc. To compute the dose to the  
191 patient in simulated treatments without real-time IGRT, the KIM-measured prostate motion  
192 without couch corrections was used as the input to the dose reconstruction method. This  
193 process resulted in three dose distributions for each treatment – the planned dose, the  
194 estimated delivered dose with real-time IGRT and the estimated delivered dose without real-  
195 time IGRT. As such, every treatment was able to act as both a case and an internal control for  
196 comparative purposes.

197  
198 The dose reconstruction was performed on the planning CT scan rather than the daily CBCT  
199 scan for each fraction. The advantage of using the planning CT is that deformable registration  
200 is not required, and the dose calculation issues on CBCT are avoided. However, the  
201 disadvantage is that the changes in the target and organs-at-risk are ignored. Nevertheless,  
202 the use of the planning CT scan for the dose reconstruction is a limitation. Had the CBCT  
203 scan been used, the motion that occurred during the treatment after the CBCT scan means  
204 that the CBCT is still not representative of the anatomy whilst the treatment beam is on.

205 Ideally this process would be based on volumetric imaging information at each time point  
206 during the treatment, with robust deformable registration and dose calculation. Until real-  
207 time volumetric imaging during treatment becomes a reality, there will be limitations in the  
208 dose accumulation process. The QUANTEC vision reference on dose accumulation  
209 highlights the need for accelerated research and development into auto-segmentation,  
210 deformation, modeling, dose accumulation, dose calculation in complex environments, and  
211 methods of estimating the uncertainty in the accumulated dose distribution over the course of  
212 therapy.<sup>27</sup>

213  
214 To improve anatomic consistency between simulation and treatment the trial's Radiotherapy  
215 Planning, Delivery and Quality Assurance procedures document recommended both a  
216 bladder protocol to regulate bladder volume and a bowel protocol. The implementation of the  
217 protocols was according to each institution's practice.

218  
219 A quality assurance program was implemented for each of the three novel technologies used  
220 in this trial, KIM,<sup>21</sup> MLC tracking<sup>28</sup> and time-resolved dose reconstruction.<sup>26</sup>

221

#### 222 *Patient outcomes*

223 A secondary outcome of the SPARK trial was to measure patient treatment outcomes (PROs)  
224 using the Expanded Prostate Cancer Index Composite (EPIC)-26<sup>29</sup> instrument. Genitourinary  
225 (GU) and gastrointestinal (GI) physician-graded toxicity were measured using the Common  
226 Terminology Criteria for Adverse Events (CTCAE) v4.0 scale.<sup>30</sup> Prostate-specific antigen  
227 (PSA) levels were recorded with biochemical PSA failure defined using the ASTRO Phoenix  
228 definition (any rise in the PSA >2 ng/mL above the nadir).<sup>31</sup>

## 229 **Results**

### 230 *Patient characteristics*

231 Forty-eight patients with prostate cancer were treated with KIM-guided SABR at five  
232 institutions. The patient characteristics and treatment information are summarized in Table 1.

233

### 234 *Patient dose results*

235 The scheme used in the SPARK trial is shown in Figure 1. KIM was used in 235 SPARK trial  
236 treatments. Five treatments were delivered without KIM because of technical issues: hard  
237 drive full (two treatments), pre-treatment/KIM position discrepancy, overlapping markers and  
238 imaging noise. For the treatment with the pre-treatment/KIM position discrepancy there was  
239 >1 mm positioning difference between KIM and the kV/kV match. For this treatment, the  
240 clinical decision was made to treat the patient using the standard of care (triggered imaging)  
241 rather than using KIM. As the kV/kV match was performed at a different time than the KIM  
242 positioning, the probable cause of this discrepancy was prostate motion. Real-time IGRT  
243 using KIM-guided motion correction occurred in at least one treatment for 88% of the  
244 patients (42/48) and 51% of the treatments (121/235).

245

246 Waterfall plots of the dose-volume points with and without real-time IGRT for the prostate  
247 (CTV D98%), rectum (V30Gy) and bladder (V30Gy) are shown in Figure 2 for the 121  
248 treatments with real-time IGRT. With real-time IGRT, the number of treatments with the  
249 prostate CTV dose 5% less, or the rectal or bladder dose 5% more than the planned dose was  
250 0, 0 and 0, respectively. Without real-time IGRT, the number of treatments with the prostate  
251 CTV dose 5% less, or the rectal and bladder dose 5% more than the planned dose was 13, 4  
252 and 14, respectively. The estimated dose distributions for the individual treatments where the

253 target dose coverage and rectal sparing were largest with real-time IGRT are shown in  
254 Figure 3.

255

256 The prostate CTV D98% dose with real-time IGRT was closer to the plan in 51% (62/121) of  
257 the treatments by an average of 1.0% (range -2.8% to 20.3%). The rectal V30Gy dose with  
258 real-time IGRT was closer to the plan in 86% (104/121) of the treatments by an average of  
259 1.5% (range -1.2% to 9.7%). The bladder V30Gy dose with real-time IGRT was closer to  
260 the plan in 90% (109/121) of the treatments by an average of 1.8% with the range from -  
261 2.3% to 14%. When the dose with real-time IGRT was worse, the difference was small, for  
262 the three metrics above the maximum detriment was -2.8%. When the dose with real-time  
263 IGRT was better, large improvements were observed for the outlier treatments. Of the three  
264 metrics above, the largest benefit over 20%. The prostate PTV D95% results are shown in the  
265 supplementary material.

266

267 The treatment delivery times with MLC tracking were similar to that of the original VMAT  
268 plan as there is negligible overhead with the MLC tracking software used. The treatment  
269 times were increased when using beam gating with couch shifts. This increase varied by the  
270 type of linac used, ranging from 30 seconds to 2 minutes per couch shift. There were 92  
271 gating events for the treatments of the 38 patients treated with the couch correction strategy.

272

### 273 *Patient outcomes*

274 One-year PROs, GU and GI physician-graded toxicity and PSA measurements are shown in  
275 Figure 4 with at least 43 of the 48 patients included. For the PROs in some domains there is a  
276 short-term drop, however by 12 months the outcomes are the same as baseline. Two grade 2  
277 GU and two grade 2 GI toxicities (4%) were observed at 12 months. No grade  $\geq 3$  GU or GI



278 toxicity was observed. All adverse events are included even if not considered to be related to  
279 treatment. Biochemical failure has been observed in one patient 42 months post-treatment.  
280 Assessment via PSMA-PET showed widespread lymphadenopathy and a solitary bone  
281 metastasis. There was no evidence of disease in the patient's prostate.

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## 282 Discussion

283 We employed KIM to enable real-time IGRT on a standard linac for the treatment of 48  
284 prostate cancer SABR patients. We investigated where the dose delivered to patients with  
285 real-time IGRT was better than the dose that would have been delivered to patients without  
286 real-time IGRT. First, we showed that this technology can be successfully implemented  
287 across several centers, vendors and clinical platforms, demonstrating both the flexibility and  
288 practicality of the KIM software device in transforming standard cancer radiation therapy  
289 systems into real-time IGRT systems that continuously monitor the target position and  
290 rotation during treatment. Second, in 42 of the 48 patients and half (51%) of the treatments,  
291 significant movement occurred during the treatment that would have been undetected without  
292 real-time IGRT. Third, the trial outcome was positive: with real-time IGRT, the number of  
293 treatments with the prostate CTV dose 5% less, or the rectal and bladder dose 5% more, than  
294 the planned dose was 0, 0 and 0, respectively, compared with 13, 4 and 14, without real-time  
295 IGRT (Figure 2). These results give confidence that with real-time IGRT the delivered dose  
296 is similar to the planned dose. When coupled with the promising early PROs that compare  
297 favorably with the five-treatment arm of the recently reported RTOG 0938 trial,<sup>32</sup> we believe  
298 this trial demonstrates the value of real-time IGRT in delivering more accurate radiation  
299 therapy.

300

301 SABR is an emerging option for prostate radiation therapy, and the evidence base continues  
302 to grow. A recent meta-analysis of ten series including 2142 patients with a median of 7  
303 years follow-up showed overall biochemical control rates of over 90% for a low to  
304 intermediate risk population, and very low rates of severe toxicities.<sup>9</sup> The Scandinavian  
305 HYPO-RT-PC randomized trial of 1180 men has shown no differences in efficacy or toxicity

306 between a conventional regimen or a seven treatment SABR alternative.<sup>33</sup> Given the multiple  
307 randomized studies maturing in this area, we expect the evidence base to only get stronger.<sup>11</sup>

308

309 Management of organ motion is critical for accurate delivery of prostate SABR, and also in  
310 other tumor sites where respiratory motion is present, such as liver and pancreas tumors. We  
311 are currently exploring expanding the use of KIM for enabling real-time IGRT into these  
312 other tumor sites. Two limitations of the KIM real-time IGRT method are the reliance on  
313 implanted markers and the imaging dose (estimated to be 440 mGy for the entire treatment<sup>34</sup>).  
314 A planned future development is to use deep learning to personalize the KIM system to  
315 minimize the marker sizes and imaging doses whilst retaining robustness and accuracy for  
316 each patient. Ultimately, developing accurate solutions to target internal tumors without  
317 implanted markers using standard cancer radiation therapy systems would further reduce  
318 barriers to the widespread adoption of real-time IGRT technologies such as KIM.

319

320 One feature of the SPARK clinical trial is the use of an estimate of the delivered dose to the  
321 patient as a surrogate for clinical outcome. The ability to compute the estimated delivered  
322 dose during each treatment is a byproduct of measuring real-time target motion from systems  
323 such as KIM. Jaffray *et al.* describe the importance of accurately estimating the dose  
324 delivered to the patient during a treatment, rather than the assumption that the delivered dose  
325 to the patient equaled the treatment plan.<sup>35,36</sup> Accurate patient dose estimation not only  
326 improves radiation outcomes modelling but will also address the technical demands of the  
327 adaptive radiation therapy paradigm. A broader limitation of our study is that it is not  
328 randomized. However, given that each patient can effectively act as their own control in  
329 modelling their dose, the study has validity since it controls for other inter-patient geometric

330 heterogeneity. Further data maturation will be needed to report efficacy and toxicity  
331 endpoints.

332

333 Another feature of the KIM system is the ability to measure rotation of the target in real-time  
334 in addition to translational displacement. In the SPARK trial, rotation observed prior to  
335 treatment was corrected at some centers via a six degree of freedom couch, and in other  
336 centers by realigning the patient. We have modelled the dosimetric impact of uncorrected  
337 rotations, but given the prostate approximates a sphere, with a relative sphericity of  $\sim 0.8$ , the  
338 dosimetric impact of rotation is smaller than for more elongated tumor volumes.<sup>37</sup> If an  
339 elongated tumor rotates, it is more likely the tumor will move outside the planned margins  
340 where the dose drops off quickly. If an approximately spherical tumor rotates, the rotated  
341 tumor is more likely to be inside the planned margins and remain in the high dose volume.  
342 Rotation may prove to be important as KIM is implemented for real-time IGRT of other  
343 tumor sites.

344

345 In this study two forms of correction for motion were used, either beam gating with couch  
346 shifts or MLC tracking. Future work could include an analysis of the dosimetric and  
347 workflow differences between these two motion correction strategies.

348

## 349 **Conclusion**

350 The SPARK trial primary outcome showed that real-time IGRT is clinically useful in  
351 improving the accuracy of the prostate and rectum dose in the presence of target motion.  
352 With the use of KIM enabling real-time IGRT on a standard linac, this approach holds  
353 promise for making real-time IGRT widely accessible for prostate cancer treatments.

354

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357

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## 467 **Figure Legends**

468 **Figure 1.** The scheme used in the SPARK trial to investigate if real-time IGRT improves  
469 dose distributions for prostate cancer SABR patients.

470

471 **Figure 2.** Waterfall plots of the difference in dose from the plan for the treatments with  
472 interventions with real-time IGRT (blue) and without real-time IGRT (red) (A) prostate (CTV  
473 D98%), (B) rectum (V30Gy), and (C) bladder (V30Gy). The 5% dose difference line is  
474 shown.

475

476 **Figure 3.** (A) Isodose distributions showing the treatments with the largest benefit for real-  
477 time IGRT for the prostate target and rectal sparing. (B) and (C) Dose volume histograms  
478 with and without real-time IGRT for the patients from the isodose in (A) upper and lower  
479 panels respectively.

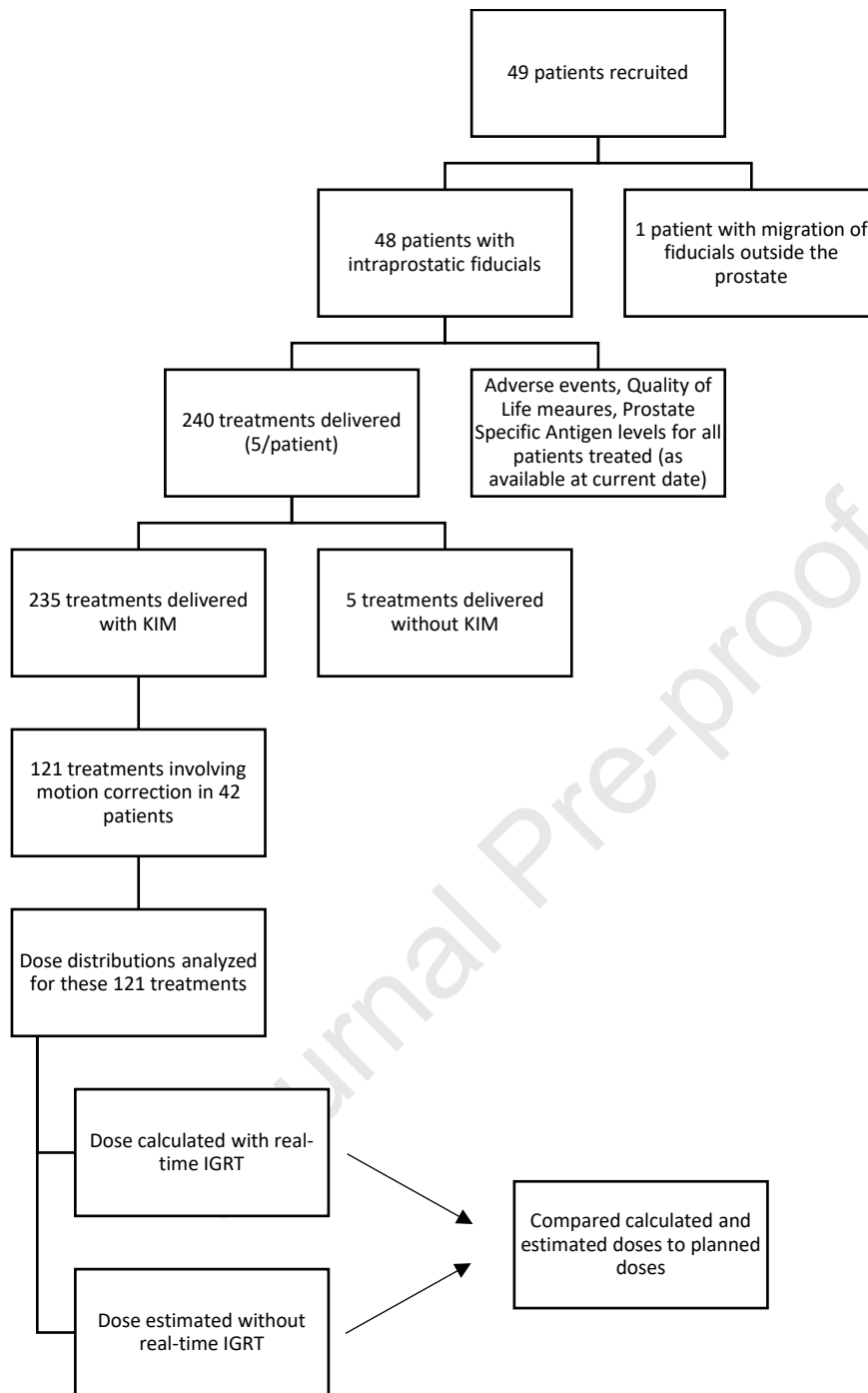
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481 **Figure 4.** (A) Median and Interquartile range (IQR) of EPIC-26 patient reported outcomes,  
482 n=43-45 depending on domain. (B) Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) levels (ng/ mL). Box  
483 plot represents median with IQR and whiskers are the minimum/maximum values, n=47. (C)  
484 CTCAE v4.0 genitourinary and (D) gastrointestinal toxicities, n=48. All adverse events are  
485 included even if not considered to be related to treatment.

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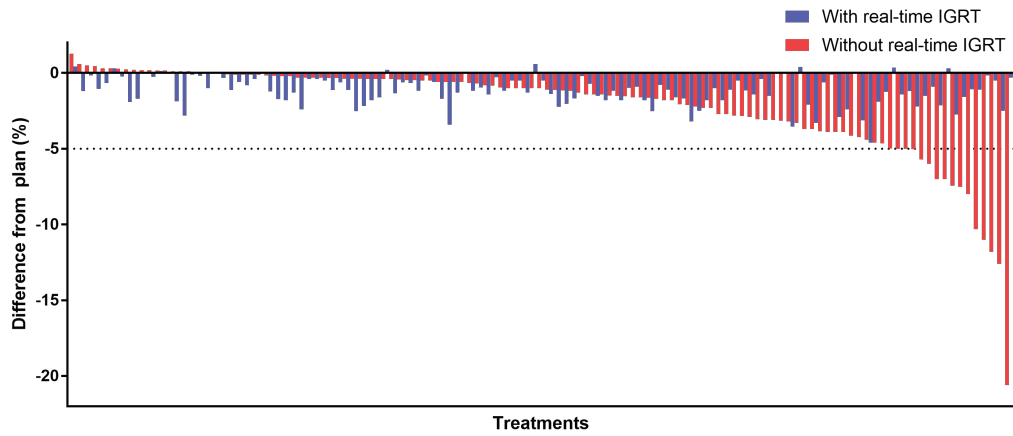
**Table 1.** Patient characteristics and treatment information for the “Blinded for review” trial.

<b>Age in years at recruitment (median, range)</b>	69 (57-81)
<b>Risk status</b>	
Low-risk Disease PSA<10 ng/mL, Gleason score 6 and stage T1 or T2a	2/48 (4%)
Intermediate-risk Disease PSA 10-20 ng/mL, Gleason score 7 or stage T2b-c	46/48 (96%)
<b>Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group performance status</b>	
0	45/48 (94%)
1	3/48 (6%)
<b>KIM-guided motion correction strategy</b>	
Gating with 2-3 mm threshold	38/48 (79%)
MLC adaptation	10/48 (21%)
<b>Cancer radiation therapy system used with KIM</b>	
Elekta Synergy	4/48 (8%)
Varian Trilogy	10/48 (21%)
Varian TrueBeam	34/48 (71%)

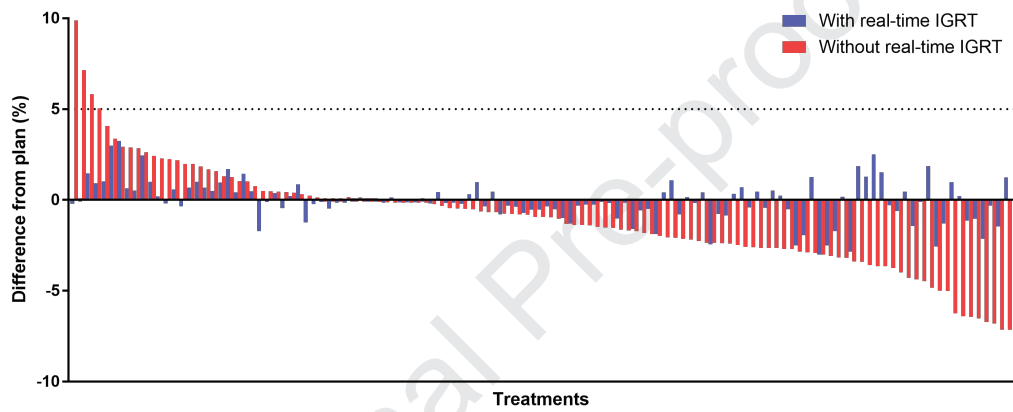


**A**

Prostate CTV D98%

**B**

Rectum V30Gy

**C**

Bladder V30Gy

