



PAPER

Dosimetric impact of soft-tissue based intrafraction motion from 3D cine-MR in prostate SBRT

RECEIVED
11 September 2019REVISED
11 December 2019ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION
16 December 2019PUBLISHED
16 January 2020D M de Muinck Keizer^{1,2}, C Kontaxis², L G W Kerkmeijer, J R N van der Voort van Zyp, C A T van den Berg, B W Raaymakers, J J W Lagendijk and J C J de Boer

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Supplementary material for this article is available [online](#)**Abstract**

To investigate the dosimetric impact of intrafraction translation and rotation motion of the prostate, as extracted from daily acquired post-treatment 3D cine-MR based on soft-tissue contrast, in extremely hypofractionated (SBRT) prostate patients. Accurate dose reconstruction is performed by using a prostate intrafraction motion trace which is obtained with a soft-tissue based rigid registration method on 3D cine-MR dynamics with a temporal resolution of 11 s. The recorded motion of each time-point was applied to the planning CT, resulting in the respective dynamic volume used for dose calculation. For each treatment fraction, the treatment delivery record was generated by proportionally splitting the plan into 11 s intervals based on the delivered monitor units. For each fraction the doses of all partial plan/dynamic volume combinations were calculated and were summed to lead to the motion-affected fraction dose. Finally, for each patient the five fraction doses were summed, yielding the total treatment dose. Both daily and total doses were compared to the original reference dose of the respective patient to assess the impact of the intrafraction motion. Depending on the underlying motion of the prostate, different types of motion-affected dose distributions were observed. The planning target volumes (PTVs) ensured CTV₃₀ (seminal vesicles) D99% coverage for all patients, CTV₃₅ (prostate corpus) coverage for 97% of the patients and GTV₅₀ (local boost) for 83% of the patients when compared against the strict planning target D99% value. The dosimetric impact due to prostate intrafraction motion in extremely hypofractionated treatments was determined. The presented study is an essential step towards establishing the actual delivered dose to the patient during radiotherapy fractions.

1. Introduction

Hypofractionated or stereotactic body radiotherapy (SBRT) treatments of prostate cancer have gained increased acceptance over the recent years (Loblaw *et al* 2013, Alayed *et al* 2018, Morgan *et al* 2018). This development has been fuelled by the relatively low α/β ratio of prostate tumors (Dasu and Toma-Dasu 2012, van de Water *et al* 2014). Hypofractionated treatments have been associated with good biochemical disease free survival and low toxicity (Widmark *et al* 2016). In addition, hypofractionated radiotherapy has shown to be non-inferior to conventional radiotherapy for intermediate-to-high risk prostate cancer with respect to failure-free survival (Widmark *et al* 2019). Another benefit of hypofractionation is the reduced number of fractions and thus hospital visits for the patients as well as associated costs (Pathmanathan *et al* 2018). Stereotactic hypofractionated treatments require a high degree of accuracy in dose delivery. While delivering a hypofractionated treatment

with an integrated boost to the intraprostatic dominant lesions seems feasible, the applicability of small margins requires monitoring of, and possibly correction for, intrafraction motion (Tree *et al* 2013).

Movement of the prostate during radiotherapy is commonly observed and can range up to 1 cm during a time period of 10 min (Mah *et al* 2002, Li *et al* 2008). This intrafraction motion consists of both drifts and sudden transient motions and occurs mainly in the anterior–posterior and superior–inferior direction (Langen *et al* 2008). Significant intrafraction prostate rotation has been observed about the left–right axis (Huang *et al* 2015).

The impact of intrafraction motion on the accumulated dose has previously been investigated by several different studies (Litzenberg *et al* 2007, Li *et al* 2008, Adamson *et al* 2011, Azcona *et al* 2014, De Leon *et al* 2019). These studies obtained the prostate intrafraction motion based on acquiring fiducial positions with 2D electronic portal imaging device (EPID) images (Azcona *et al* 2014), tracking implanted radiobeacons (Litzenberg *et al* 2007, Li *et al* 2008), by using kV fluoroscopy and posttreatment cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) (Adamson *et al* 2011) or by tracking points of interest on interleaved cine-MR images (De Leon *et al* 2019). To achieve highly accurate dose reconstructions, information on the involved 3D pelvic anatomy should be available during the dose delivery time frame (Poulsen *et al* 2012). The previously mentioned studies did not have this information available and therefore cannot fully describe the dosimetric impact of intrafraction motion.

With the introduction of systems capable of magnetic resonance (MR) guided radiotherapy (Lagendijk *et al* 2014, Mutic and Dempsey 2014, Keall *et al* 2014), new opportunities become available. Due to the fact that these systems can simultaneously acquire MR-images during delivery of radiotherapy, information on the patient's anatomy during beam delivery has become available at a high temporal and spatial resolution (Pathmanathan *et al* 2018). This information can be used to enable the tracking of tumor motion during beam-on and to obtain volumetric soft tissue information of surrounding tissues for accurate dose reconstruction (van Herk *et al* 2018).

During dose reconstruction anatomical motion traces are combined with the treatment delivery record. The anatomical trace may describe translations and rotations but could be extended to include the deformations of the anatomy over time. The treatment delivery record describes the machine parameters of the linear accelerator (linac) during delivery. By combining the two, the appropriate part of the treatment can be delivered on a specific dynamic anatomy and then accumulated on a reference anatomical grid yielding a motion-affected dose distribution.

In principle, this information can be fed back into a dosimetric optimization loop to compensate for inter-fraction motion in a fraction-by-fraction basis as well as intrafraction motion during delivery. We have previously presented an inter-beam replanning pipeline based on accurate dose reconstruction of the previously delivered dose during treatment using our in-house developed Adaptive Sequencer (ASEQ). Such techniques can ensure target coverage and organ at risk (OAR) sparing and enable safe margin reduction (Kontaxis *et al* 2017b).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of intrafraction motion on the dose distributions of hypofractionated (SBRT) prostate patients using clinically delivered plans. Soft-tissue tracking was used to extract the intrafraction motion of the prostate from full 3D cine-MR data, acquired daily after each radiotherapy fraction of these patients. The magnitude and frequency of prostate intrafraction motion based on these 3D cine-MR images was previously investigated (de Muinck Keizer *et al* 2019a). For each treatment fraction accurate retrospective dose reconstruction is performed by simulating the intrafraction motion using the respective daily motion trace.

2. Material and methods

Twenty-nine prostate patients who underwent hypofractionated stereotactic body radiotherapy within the HypoFLAME trial (NCT02853110) were included in this study. A fractionation scheme of 5×7 Gy was used, with focal boosts up to 5×10 Gy to visible tumor nodule(s) on MRI. All patients had four implanted cylindrical gold FM (length: 5 mm, diameter: 1 mm) and were treated with online translation corrections based on the fiducial marker positions in kilovoltage (kV) images. Patients underwent MR imaging sessions after each weekly fraction at the University Medical Center of Utrecht between may 2016 and january 2017. During these repeated imaging sessions cine-MR images were acquired, resulting in a unique cine-MR imaging data set for every individual fraction. These cine-MR sessions consisted of 55 sequentially obtained 3D data sets ('dynamics'). Each cine-MR session consisted of a 3D balanced steady-state free precession (bSSFP) gradient echo sequence, acquiring one volume every 11 s over a time span of 10 min.

Tumor nodules visible on multiparametric MRI (T2 weighted, diffusion weighted imaging (DWI) and dynamic contrast enhanced (DCE)) were delineated as gross tumor volume (GTV). The whole prostate gland was considered as clinical target volume (CTV). The CTV included the GTV with an added margin of 4 mm, while excluding the OARs. The planning target volume (PTV) included the CTV with an added margin of 4 mm in all directions and was based on earlier experience with previously treated patients in our clinic. Seminal vesical contours were included based at the judgment of the treating physician. Rectum contours included the external

Table 1. Prostate planning constraints, where GTV is the gross tumor volume, CTV the clinical target volume (including the whole prostate gland) and PTV as the planning target volume.

VOI		Constraints	
GTV_50	V40Gy	>	99%
	V50Gy	<=	0.1 cc
CTV_35	V35Gy	>	99%
PTV_30	V30Gy	>	99%
PTV_33.25	V33.25Gy	>	99%
Rectum	Dmax	<	40 Gy
	V35Gy	<	2 cc
	V32Gy	<=	15%
	V28Gy	<=	20%
Bladder	V42Gy	<	1 cc
	V37Gy	<	5 cc
	V32Gy	<=	15%
	V28Gy	<=	20%
Urethra	Dmax	<	42 Gy
Femur heads	V28Gy	<=	5%

sphincter of the anus to the rectosigmoid flexure, where the anal canal was contoured from the external sphincter up to the internal sphincter (normally 3 cm). Additional OARs were the penile bulb, prostatic urethra and the bladder. Small bowel contour was only included when it was located near the PTV (den Hartogh *et al* 2019).

Treatment plans were generated in the Monaco treatment planning system (Elekta AB, Stockholm, Sweden) using dose to medium and patients were treated on conventional Agility Linacs with 5 mm multi-leaf collimator (MLC) leaf width and a total of 160 leaves. These treatment plans consisted of 10 MV volumetric arc therapy (VMAT) plans, using two full arcs and fulfilled the clinical constraints presented in table 1. The minimum segment width used was 0.5 cm with a maximum of 144 control points per arc. A grid spacing of 3 mm was used, with a statistical uncertainty per control point of 8%. Fiducial marker-based online corrections were applied during treatment.

For each cine-MR session a soft-tissue tracking algorithm was used to obtain the prostate intrafraction motion. This tracking method uses a delineation of the prostate body on the first cine-MR dynamic to rigidly register the prostate volume from subsequent cine-MR dynamics based on soft tissue contrast (de Muinck Keizer *et al* 2019a). The first cine-MR dynamic was then registered to the planning CT, based on the center of mass of the fiducial markers which were manually identified by a clinician (de Muinck Keizer *et al* 2019b). The fiducial marker based registration of the first cine-MR dynamic to the planning CT was used to transfer the local cine-MR motion to the CT coordinate system and maintained the rotation of the prostate, as the marker based registration was only performed using translations. This procedure mimics the daily re-positioning protocol we applied during actual treatment, in which only changes in translation based on the position of the fiducial markers are corrected for by a couch shift.

Then for each treatment fraction of the patient—assumed to have lasted 6 min for all patients on average—the treatment delivery record was generated by proportionally splitting the plan into 11 s intervals based on the delivered Monitor Units. This led to 33 partial plans per fraction per patient for these dual arc VMAT plans. For each one of the 33 partial plans the dynamic volume—corresponding to the respective cine-MR rigid transformation—containing the necessary electron density values for the dose calculation was generated by rigidly transforming the planning CT. The body and bone structures from the CT were maintained and the rigidly transformed targets, bladder and rectum were assigned to water density (Kontaxis *et al* 2017a). The partial dynamic doses were calculated by using our in-house treatment planning system and research version of the GPUMCD dose engine (Hissoiny *et al* 2011). Then the respective inverse transformations were used to warp these partial dynamic doses back to the reference space.

For each fraction the motion-affected dose (INTRA_FR) was calculated by summing these 33 dynamic partial doses. Finally, for each patient the five fraction doses were added leading to the total treatment dose (INTRA). Both daily and total doses were compared to the original reference (REF) dose of the respective patient to assess the impact of the intrafraction motion.

3. Results

3.1. Motion analysis

A total of 143 cine-MR imaging sessions including 4719 dynamics among 29 patients were analyzed. The population intrafraction results during the simulated period of the VMAT treatment are provided in figure 1. Towards the end of this 6 min period, a group trend of 0.7 mm with a 95 percentile spread range of 6.9 mm in the anterior–posterior direction, -0.7 mm with a 95 percentile spread range of 6.3 mm in the cranial caudal direction and a rotation about the left–right axis of -0.4 degrees with a 95 percentile spread range of 9.9 degrees was observed.

3.2. Dosimetric analysis

Figure 2 shows a typical example of the dose distribution before and after dose accumulation. The dose accumulation as shown in this figure was performed for all fractions for one patient. The dose differences appear mainly in the bladder and rectum outside of the CTVs, depending on the prostate motion.

Figure 3 shows the D99% Dose Volume Histogram (DVH) point of the clinical target structures between REF and INTRA for all patients. The PTV_30 and PTV_33.25 had an average decrease of $3.1\% \pm 2.5\%$ and $1.9\% \pm 1.7\%$ respectively. For the clinically relevant target structures, the average D99% drop was $0.6\% \pm 1.0\%$, $0.2\% \pm 1.0\%$ and $1.2\% \pm 2.0\%$ for the CTV_30, CTV_35 and GTV_50 respectively. The mean dose of GTV_50 dropped by $1.0\% \pm 0.8\%$.

The PTVs ensured CTV_30 (seminal vesicles) coverage for all patients, CTV_35 (prostate body) coverage for 97% of the patients and GTV_50 (local boost) for 83% of the patients when strictly compared against the clinical constraints (table 1).

Figure 4 provides the boxplots for the V28Gy and V32Gy DVH points of the rectum and bladder. Both show very stable behavior between all patients compared to REF and are well within clinical constraints.

The Dmax DVH point of the rectum and urethra also remained stable and close to the REF plans, which can be observed in figure 5.

Depending on the underlying motion of the prostate, different types of motion-affected dose distributions can be observed. An overview of differences in intrafraction motion for a single patient with a high dosimetric impact and a single patient with a low dosimetric impact is provided in figure 6. The dosimetric impact in the DVH plots for these two patients is shown in figure 7. In this figure one case features low magnitude motion (figure 7(a)), while the second case has higher magnitudes of motion (figure 7(b)). In the first (lower magnitude) case the DVH lines for targets and OARs overlap between REF and INTRA doses, while in the second case (higher magnitude) both CTVs and the GTV have reduced coverage with the bladder entering the high dose region and receiving more dose while the rectum dose decreases.

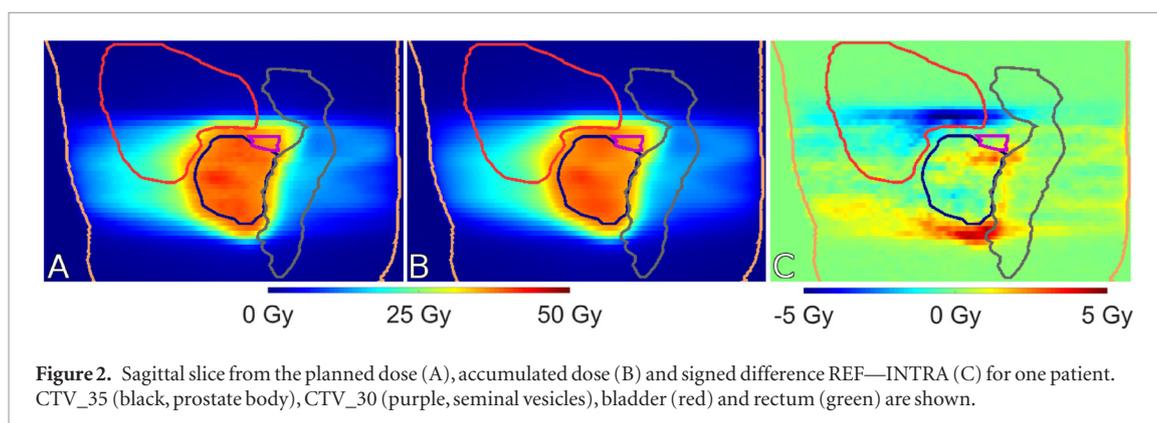
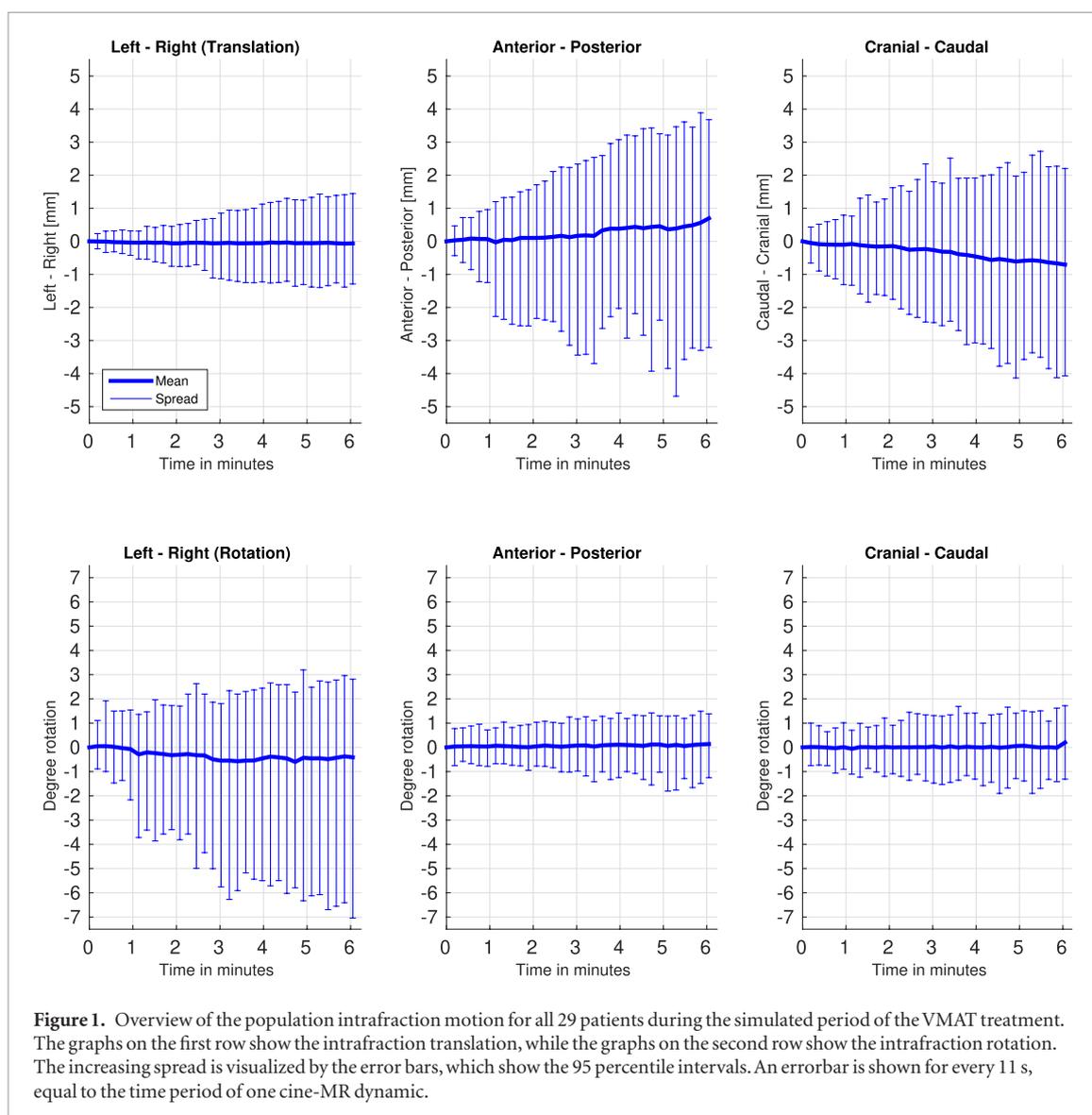
Having the daily motion affected dose distributions (INTRA_FR) allows us to zoom into the individual fractions per patient. In the case of the patient corresponding to the total treatment dose in figure 7(b), on a fraction-by-fraction basis the CTV_30, CTV_35 and GTV_50 were underdosed by $1.9\% \pm 1.1\%$, $4.3\% \pm 2.5\%$ and $5.6\% \pm 4.2\%$ respectively (figure 8) while the bladder V32Gy point was violated in almost all fractions compared to REF (figure 9).

4. Discussion

In this work we present a dose reconstruction study for twenty-nine previously treated prostate patients in our clinic with daily acquired post-treatment 3D cine-MR scans. We use a soft-tissue based rigid registration to extract translations and rotations of the prostate every 11 s and use these data as an intrafraction motion trace to perform accurate dose reconstruction.

The presented results demonstrate the potential dosimetric impact of intrafraction motion in SBRT prostate treatments with integrated GTV boost. Having considered the fact that the daily cine-MR data provide very realistic but not the true online motion that occurred during treatment, the 4 mm margins applied clinically in these SBRT treatments seem to overall ensure the safe delivery of the intended planned dose to the patients. For the sake of data completeness, a comparison is provided in the supplementary material (available at stacks.iop.org/PMB/65/025012/mmedia) with in-trafraction motion determined from the implanted fiducial markers (FM) and the cine-MR imaging sessions.

The PTVs present in these plans were adequate and maintained dose CTV coverage for all but one patient based on the planning constraints in table 1. A similar study using proton therapy showed comparable results in which intrafraction motion degrades the CTV coverage, but was maintained averaged over the course of the treatment (Tang *et al* 2013). More interesting is the GTV coverage which, given the smaller volume and steep boost dose gradient, was maintained for 25 out of 29 patients. The importance and clinical relevance of reduced accuracy in the boost dose delivery has to be further evaluated. The systematic caudal shift of the prostate



of -0.7 mm due to bladder filling observed in the motion data was also overall observed in the motion-affected doses in which the bladder V32Gy was increased by $0.3\% \pm 1.9\%$ and rectum V32Gy decreased by $0.6\% \pm 1.4\%$ on average among the INTRA_FR daily accumulated dose distributions.

We have used 3D cine-MR with high spatial frequency to monitor the prostate motion instead of 2D surrogates (Litzenberg *et al* 2007, Li *et al* 2008). A limitation of this study is that we rely on rigid registration of the prostate and apply it to nearby OARs instead of deformable methods covering the whole patient anatomy. However besides rigid translations we also use the recorded prostate rotation for the anatomical motion tracking extracted from the 3D data which is known to be the principal motion component (de Boer *et al* 2005). The dynamic volumes used for dose calculation are generated by rigidly transforming the volumes of interest while maintaining

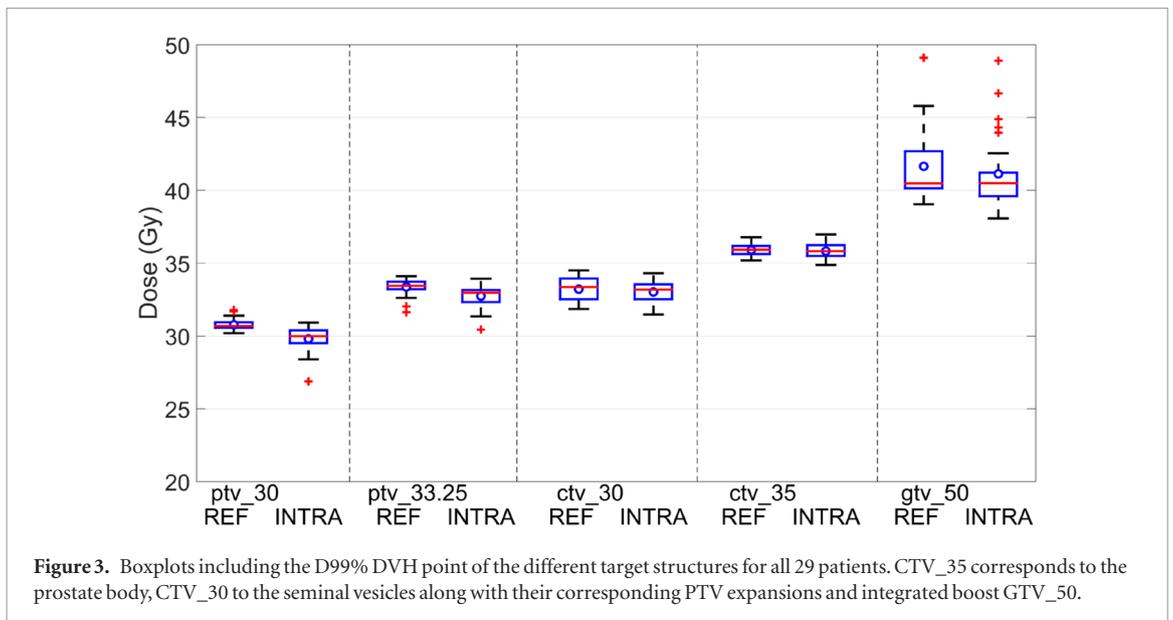


Figure 3. Boxplots including the D99% DVH point of the different target structures for all 29 patients. CTV_35 corresponds to the prostate body, CTV_30 to the seminal vesicles along with their corresponding PTV expansions and integrated boost GTV_50.

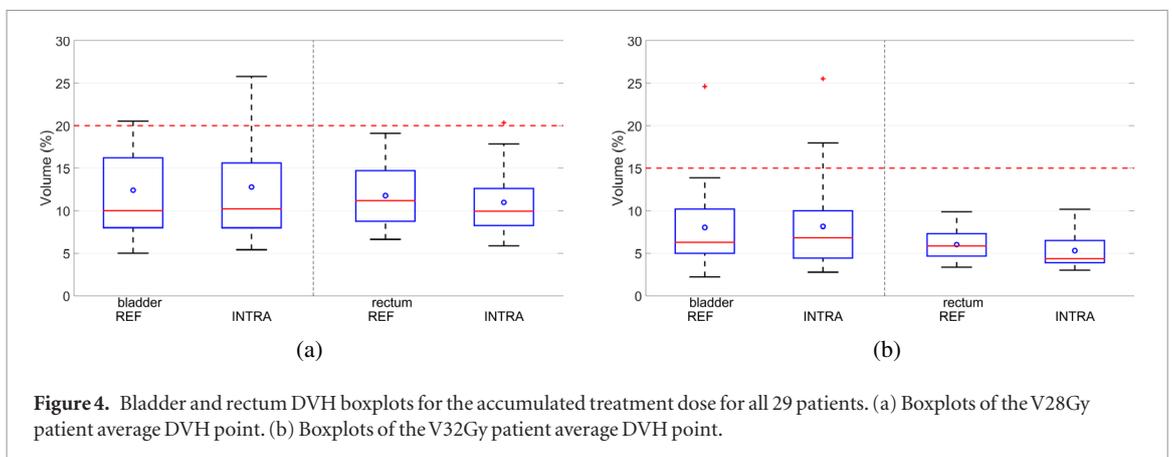


Figure 4. Bladder and rectum DVH boxplots for the accumulated treatment dose for all 29 patients. (a) Boxplots of the V28Gy patient average DVH point. (b) Boxplots of the V32Gy patient average DVH point.

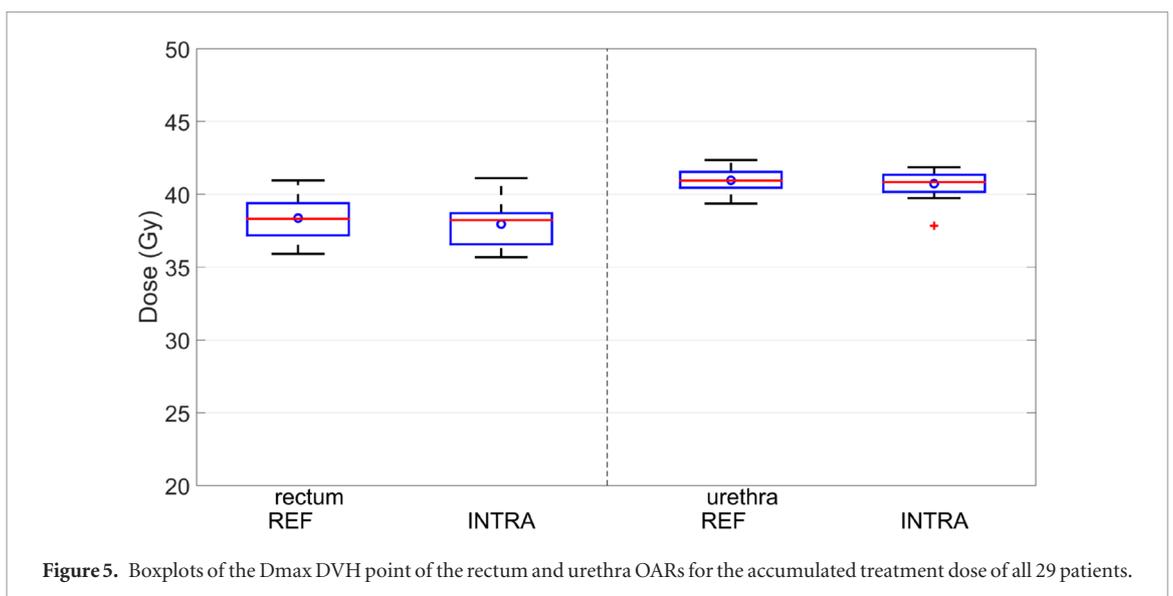
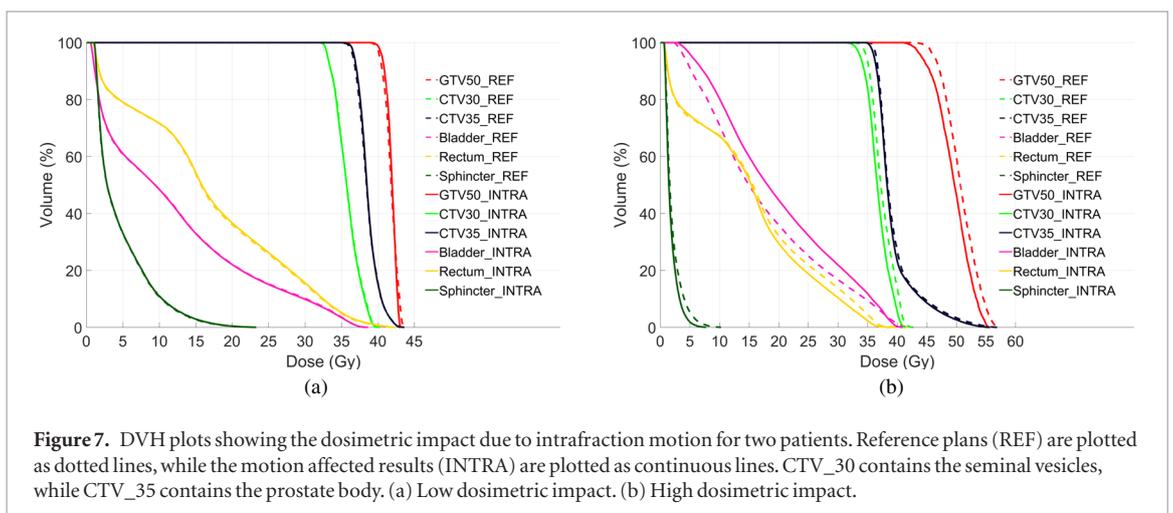
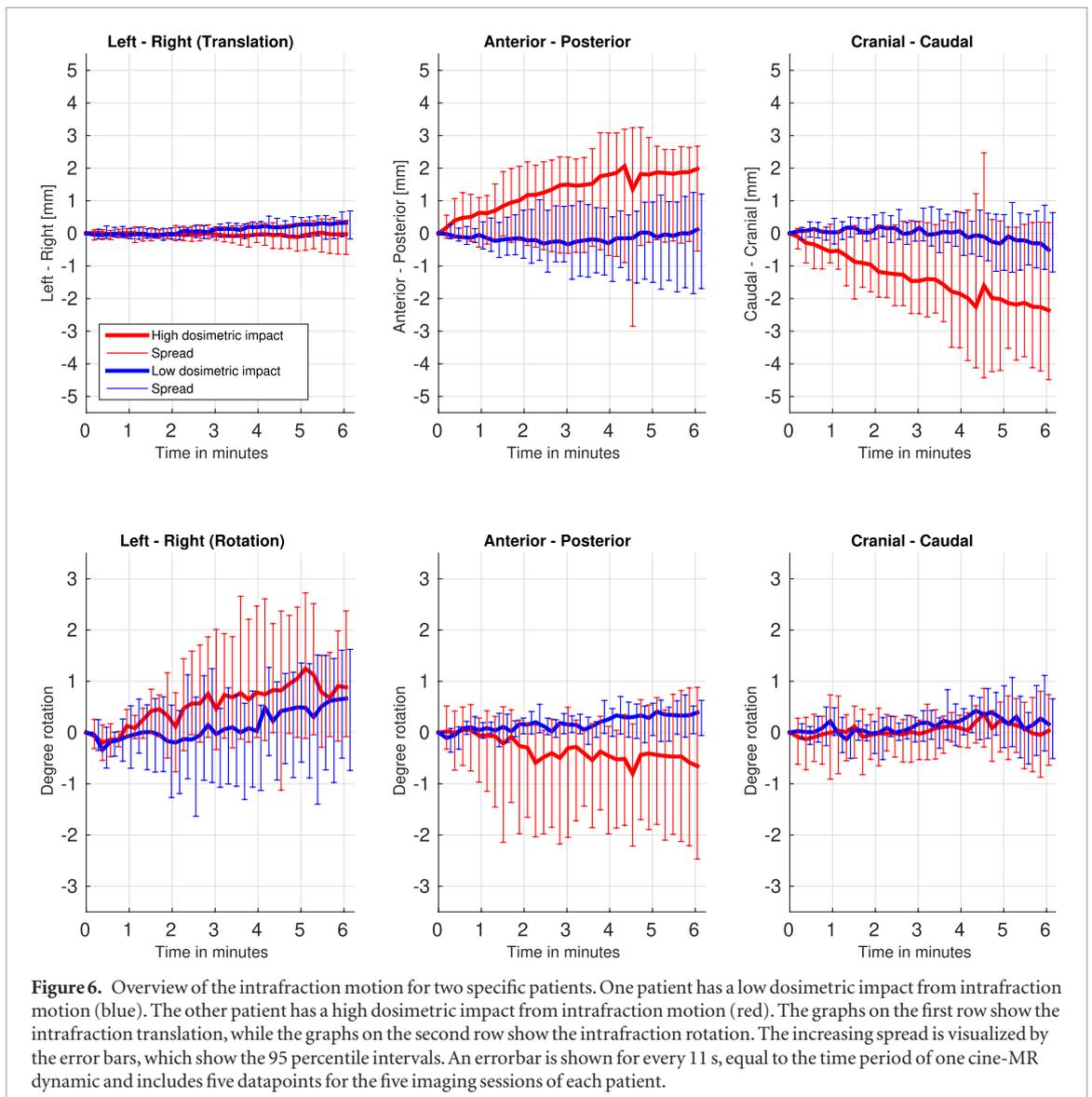


Figure 5. Boxplots of the Dmax DVH point of the rectum and urethra OARs for the accumulated treatment dose of all 29 patients.

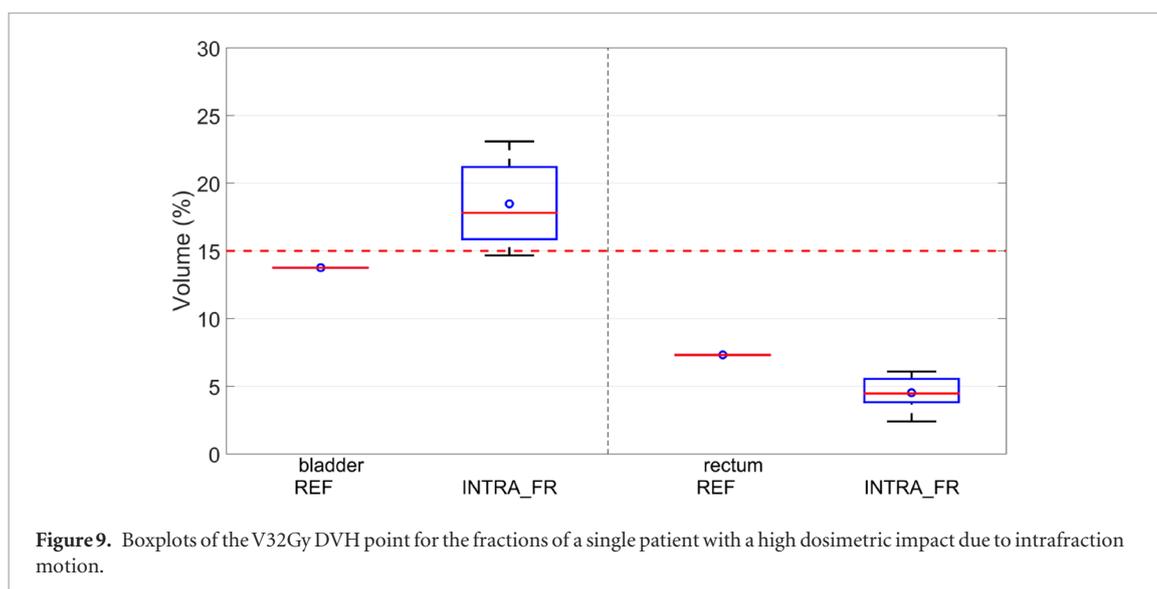
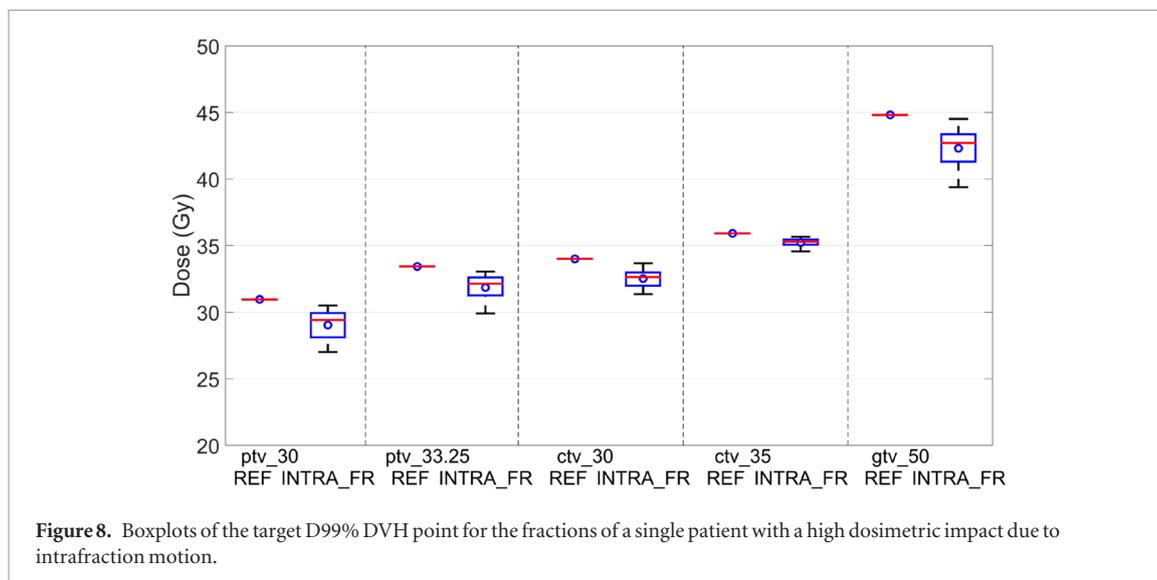
the original body contour and bone structures. This method, compared to transforming the whole body of the patient, ensures that the calculated rigid prostate registration is not extrapolated to the whole anatomy and thus does not affect the dose calculation in an unrealistic way.

The next step is to use 3D deformable registration between the reference volume and the 3D cine-MR to yield 3D deformable vector fields (DVF) and track the whole anatomy including the bladder, rectum and seminal vesicles. In the current work and all similar rigid-based methods, the reported dosimetric differences have an



increasing associated uncertainty as we go further away from the prostate. This means that the accumulated high dose levels of bladder and rectum (figures 4 and 5) are quite robust but parameters like the mean dose should be carefully read. In the same way, the dose variation of the CTV_30 including the seminal vesicles, which can be deformed in various ways compared to the prostate body, is non-trivial to interpret under the rigid assumption (figure 3).

While in this work the partial plans used for dose reconstruction are generated by splitting the patient VMAT plan into sub-plans, our dose reconstruction is also compatible with delivery records from linear accelerator



log files that are generated during the actual radiation therapy for every fraction (Kontaxis *et al* 2017b). They contain all the relevant machine parameters timestamped on a high frequency rate and, thus when combined to high quality motion data, lead to accurate dose reconstruction. In this study, in the absence of such log files, we had to work with a fair assumption of the treatment times which was based on the observed average times during the treatment of several patients of this clinical protocol. The average delivery time of these 29 VMAT plans on a linac emulator was 5.5 min. Given the potential differences between the plans delivered on the emulator and actual linac (e.g. gantry movements, MLC, dose rate timings), we feel that the used 6 min is a fair assumption for the simulated treatments as described. In this respect, the dose reconstruction results and the conclusions in this study would not be significantly affected by slightly different treatment times and/or log file based calculations.

An extension of the current soft-tissue tracking would be the inclusion of the seminal vesicles as an additional region during the registration. As a first step prior to moving to full 3D DVFs, separate translation and rotation values for the seminal vesicles could be potentially used to get a more accurate dose estimation to the target volume.

We are presently developing a complete dose reconstruction pipeline, using the machine log files and online acquired cine-MR data during treatment for recently treated prostate patients on our MR-linac system. This will yield the first delivered dose reconstruction based on 4D anatomical data acquired during treatment. We expect that these dosimetric results will benefit from reduced uncertainty in comparison to this study, as then the cine-MR is acquired during the beam-on period and we will be able to make use of the machine log files. Despite the mentioned uncertainties, we do not expect significant changes for the dosimetric impact in the high-dose regions in future studies. Currently, we are focusing on optimizing the processing pipeline in terms of speed which becomes a key factor for such online applications, as all pipeline components including registration and dose calculation should be able to keep up with the imaging and radiation delivery.

This type of analyses will initially allow us to accurately track what we truly delivered daily to the patient and further enable to act upon if needed, by feeding the reconstructed dose into modular and fast planning pipelines to perform online plan adaptation (Kontaxis *et al* 2015). These online adaptive workflows along with the MR-linac soft-tissue imaging capabilities could enable extremely hypo-fractionated treatments with focal boosting and a safe margin reduction.

5. Conclusion

The dosimetric impact due to prostate intrafraction motion extracted by soft-tissue tracking on 3D cine-MR was simulated for previously treated patients in our clinic. The presented dose reconstruction pipeline and analysis are essential for establishing the actual delivered dose to the patient during the radiotherapy fractions. These results demonstrate that the clinically applied margins in these extremely hypofractionated prostate IGRT treatments are able to guarantee safe delivery of the planned dose to the patient. The emergence of MRI-guided radiotherapy further allows us to evaluate the impact of intrafraction motion with high spatial and temporal resolution. The next step is to apply such dose reconstruction pipelines on the actual MR-linac data. This will provide an invaluable decision making tool for preparing inter- and intra-fraction adaptation strategies for MR-guided radiotherapy that ensure continuous online target coverage and OAR sparing.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Elekta AB, Stockholm, Sweden for providing some of their research software tools.

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