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▲ Development and automation of radiochemical processes for medical radioisotopes.

MARTINI P. <sup>(1)</sup><sup>(2)</sup>, BOSCHI A. <sup>(2)</sup>, PASQUALI M. <sup>(1)</sup><sup>(2)</sup>, UCCELLI L. <sup>(2)</sup>, PUPILLO G. <sup>(1)</sup>, MOU L. <sup>(1)</sup>, CISTERNINO S. <sup>(1)</sup>, SCIACCA G. <sup>(1)</sup>, ROSSI ALVAREZ C. <sup>(1)</sup>, DUATTI A. <sup>(2)</sup>, ESPOSITO J. <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> INFN, Legnaro National Laboratories, Legnaro, PD, Italy

<sup>(2)</sup> University of Ferrara, Ferrara, Italy

With the aim to obtain an injectable radiopharmaceutical, the radiochemical processing of an irradiated target plays a fundamental role in the cyclotron-driven production of radionuclides. The adoption of a radiochemical processing is not only mandatory for radionuclides medical-applications but it is also advantageous in support of nuclear data research. Radiochemistry may thus be considered as the necessary bridge between Nuclear Physics and Medicine. Moreover, complex multi-step radiochemical procedures, ranging from the production and purification of the radionuclide, up to the radiopharmaceutical preparation, require the use of remotely controlled automatic systems. The most recent advances in radiochemical processes and automation technologies developed within both past and underway LARAMED research programs are here discussed.

▲ Design of a beam shaping assembly for BNCT application.

BORTOLUSSI S.

*Department of Physics, University of Pavia e INFN, Unit of Pavia, Italy*

Boron Neutron Capture Therapy (BNCT) consists in patient irradiation with low-energy neutrons after administration of a tumour-targeting borated drug. The intensity and the spectral characteristics of the neutron beam are a pivotal aspect of the design of a clinical BNCT facility. Modern BNCT is based on neutron beams obtained from proton accelerators coupled to Be or Li targets. The project of a beam shaping assembly for a 5 MeV, 30 microA proton beam with Be target will be presented, together with the assessment of its therapeutic potential and suitability for clinical use.

▲ Il progetto TOP-IMPLART.

PICARDI L. <sup>(1)</sup>, AMPOLLINI A. <sup>(1)</sup>, BAZZANO G. <sup>(1)</sup>, CARDELLI F. <sup>(1)</sup>, CISBANI E. <sup>(3)</sup>, DE ANGELIS C. <sup>(3)</sup>, ESPOSITO G. <sup>(3)</sup>, FORTINI F. <sup>(1)</sup>, GHIO F. <sup>(3)</sup>, MARINO C. <sup>(2)</sup>, DELLA MONACA S. <sup>(3)</sup>, MONTEREALI R.M. <sup>(1)</sup>, NENZI P. <sup>(1)</sup>, NICHELATTI E. <sup>(1)</sup>, PATRONO C. <sup>(2)</sup>, PICCININI M. <sup>(1)</sup>, RONSIVALLE C. <sup>(1)</sup>, SORIANI A. <sup>(4)</sup>, STRIGARI L. <sup>(4)</sup>, SURRENTI V. <sup>(1)</sup>, TABOCCHINI A. <sup>(3)</sup>, TRINCA E. <sup>(1)</sup>, VADRUCCI M. <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> ENEA, Centro Ricerche Frascati, Frascati, RM

<sup>(2)</sup> ENEA, Centro Ricerche Casaccia, Roma

<sup>(3)</sup> Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Roma

<sup>(4)</sup> IFO - Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori Regina Elena, Roma

Il progetto TOP-IMPLART condotto da ENEA in collaborazione con Istituto Superiore di Sanità e Istituti Fisioterapici Ospedalieri di Roma ha come obiettivo la realizzazione di un impianto prototipale di protonterapia basato sull'impiego di una sequenza di acceleratori lineari a radiofrequenza. Il progetto, finanziato dalla Regione Lazio, prevede la realizzazione di strutture acceleranti fino a una energia di 150 MeV, adeguata alla cura dei tumori superficiali e testa-collo. Esse sono in fase di realizzazione e test presso i Laboratori dell'ENEA di Frascati, dove attualmente è installato il segmento fino a 55 MeV. Si descrivono le caratteristiche e lo stato di avanzamento del progetto.