Linear Accelerator Technology

Lalit M Aggarwal PhD
Associate Professor

BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY
VARANASI

Criteria for Selection

Radiation Beam Characteristics
- Beam edge sharpness (penumbra) , Beam penetration (energy)

Machine Characteristics
- Dose rate, Patient collimator distance
- Isocentre height, Radioactive source versus x-rays

Service/Maintenance Issues

Safety Considerations
- Radiation protection

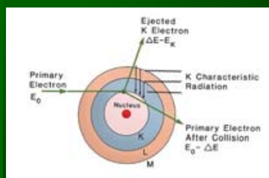
Cost Considerations

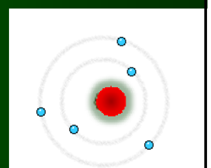
Additional Features

Introduction

- What is Linac?
  - X-rays, Electron
- What is x-rays?
- Incidental discovery!
- How x-rays are produced?
- Physics of x-rays

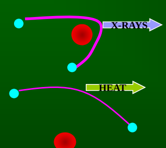
Characteristic X-rays

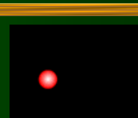




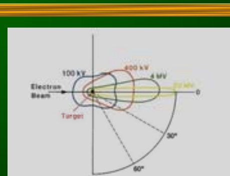
from Faiz Khan

Bremsstrahlung X-rays





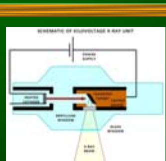
Angular Distribution

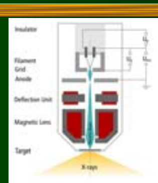


from Faiz Khan

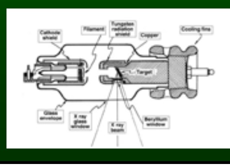
- Angular distribution becomes more “forward peaked” as the electron energy increases

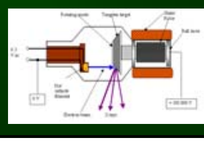
X-Ray Tube





microfocus x-ray tubes (NDT)





Cathode

- Tungsten filament (3370 ° C)
- Thermionic emission
- Focusing cup
- Dual filaments

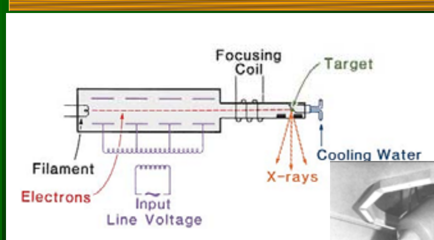
Anode

- Tungsten target
  - High melting point
  - High Z (74) , X-ray α Z^2
- Heat dissipation
  - Copper anode
  - Rotating anode /Stationary
- Anode hood – copper and tungsten shields intercept stray electrons and x rays

Limitations of X-ray Tube

- High voltage
- Millions of volts cannot be held in single gap

Resonant Transformer



From Khan

300 to 2,000 kV

Require More space, bulky insulation

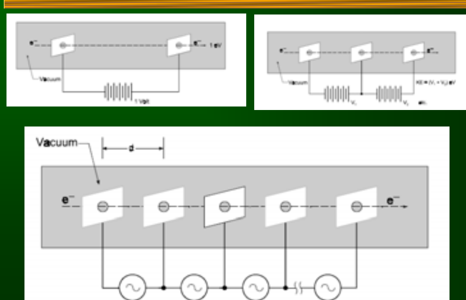
Clinical Radiation Generators

Grenz rays	> 20 kVp
Contact Therapy	40-50 kVp
Superficial Therapy	50-150 kVp
Orthovoltage	150-500 kVp
Supervoltage	500-1000 kVp
Megavoltage	> 1000 kVp

Triple cascade X-Ray tube

Triple cascade X-Ray tube in the lab of dr. Coolidge 1928
In this lab model every bulb is fed with 300KV, the tube was 2,4 meter long with bulb diameters of 30cm!

Acceleration?



Linac?

A device in which electron beam is accelerated in linear path with the help of high frequency microwaves to produces high energy photon or electron beam

History

- Linacs were developed concurrently by two groups:
  - W.W. Hansen’s group at Stanford University in the U.S.A.
  - D.D. Fry’s group at Telecommunications Research Establishment in the U.K.
- Both groups - interested in Linacs for research
- Feasible - radar technology developed during World War II

Basic Linac

Low energy

- 4-8 MV
  - Straight-through beam
  - No Bending
  - fixed flattening filter
  - external wedges
  - symmetric jaws
  - single ionisation chamber
  - isocentric mounting.

Medium/High Energy

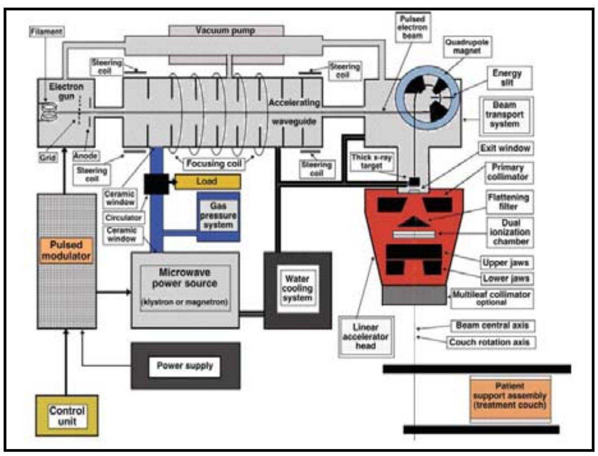
- 10-25 MV
  - Dual photon energy and multiple electron energies
  - Achromatic bending
  - dual scattering foils or scanned electron pencil beam
  - motorized wedge
  - Asymmetric jaws.
- Advanced features
  - EPID, MLC
  - IMRT, IGRT

Basic Accelerator Technology

- Sophisticated & complex
- Mechanical, Electrical, electronics, Radiation, Optics, Microwave
- Microwave Power sources
- Acceleration structures
- Beam transport systems
- Support structures

Major Components

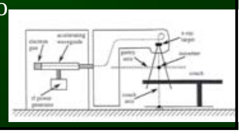
- Control Consol
- Power Supply
- Modulator
- Magnetron or Klystron
- Electron Gun
- Wave Guide system
- Accelerator Tube
- Bending Magnet
- Treatment Head (Straight Beam/(Bent Beam)
- Treatment Couch



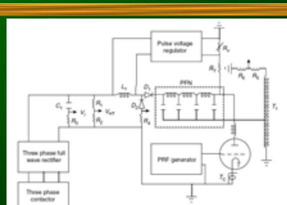
Modulator Cabinet

The combination of high voltage source, PFN, HV switch, and pulse transformer is known as "*modulator*"

- Power distribution system
- High Voltage pulses to gun & RF Generator
- Power suppliers



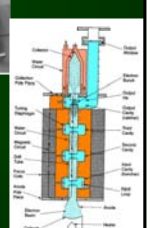
PFN



- The modulator supplies high-voltage pulses lasting a few microseconds to the microwave source and electron gun.
- The PRF (pulse repetition frequency) is set by the PRF generator connected to the thyratron grid and is usually adjustable in the range 50 Hz to 1000 Hz.

Microwave Source

- Magnetron
  - Low energy accelerators
  - Less costly
  - Smaller least complicated
  - Less reliable
  - shorter lifespan
- Klystron
  - Stable at higher energies
  - Costly & Complex
  - Bulky

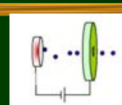


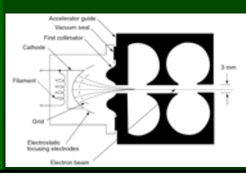
Classification as per RF fields

- L band - 10^3 MHz
  - physically larger but capable of beam powers considerably above 20 kW
- S band - 2856 MHz
  - more compact but limited to beam powers below 20 kW
- X band - 10^4 MHz
  - Tomotherapy
  - robotic arm mounting, miniature form
  - Mobetron (IORT system)

Electron Gun

- Source of the electrons
- Produced thermionically
- Injected onto the central axis of the waveguide.



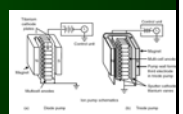



Vacuum & Cooling

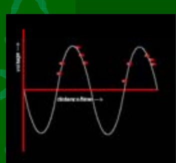
- The vacuum system
  - Maintains requiredlow pressures
  - required for operation of WG, Gun and bending magnets.
  - Prevents breakdown of the high electric fields required during accelerator operation.
- The water cooling system
  - Required to establish a stable operating temperature.

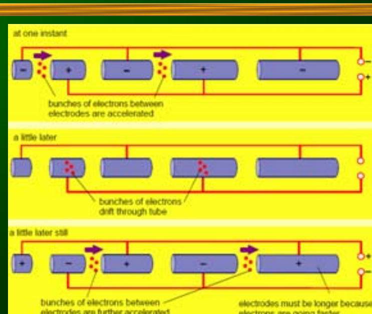
Ion Pump

- Electric field to accelerate and traps ions
- Solid electrodes in pump usually made from Titanium.
- Ion Pumps have no moving parts and use no oil

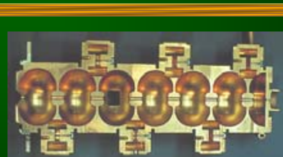


Electron Acceleration





Accelerator Structures

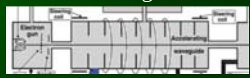


Section of SW accelerator

A cylindrical tube in which electrons from electron gun, are accelerated by the amplified microwaves and exit the waveguide to enter the *treatment head.*

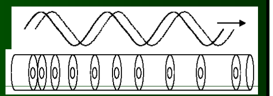
Focusing

- Focusing coils
  - Aligned along the exterior of the waveguide.
  - Magnetic fields parallel to the long axis of the waveguide.
- Steering coils
  - Independently of focusing coils
  - Ensure, electron beam is at the centre of WG
  - Entrance and exit electron beam as desired

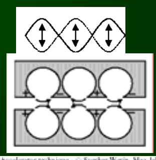


Types of Waveguide

- Travelling Wave



- Standing Wave

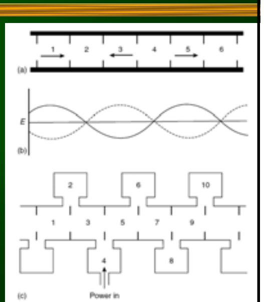


Standing wave

(a) Arrangement of the waveguide.

(b) Standing waves.

(c) Shows a side-coupled cavity.

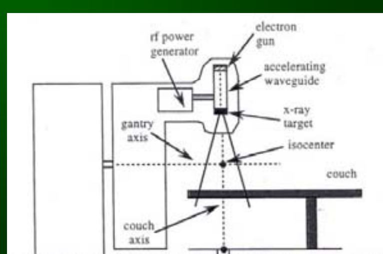


From Greene and Williams

Comparison

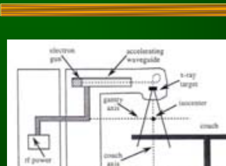
Travelling Wave	Standing Wave
Longer structure	Shorter structure
Short fill time	Longer fill time
Circulator not required	Circulator required
High accelerating beam capacity	Low accelerating beam capacity
Spectrum insensitive to accelerating field	Spectrum sensitive to accelerating field
Bunching less sensitive to accelerating field	Bunching highly sensitive to accelerating field
Generally low vacuum requirement	High vacuum requirement

Position of WG

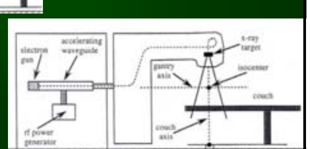


Wave guide in Head

Position of WG



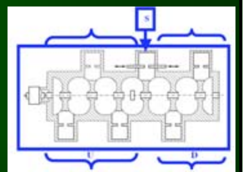
Wave guide Gantry

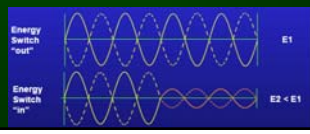


Wave guide in Gantry Stand

Energy Change?

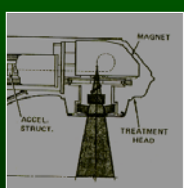
- Energy switch
  - fields in the accelerating cavities in section D may be varied in a controlled amount relative to the fields in the cavities in section U

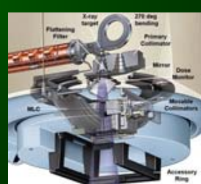




Treatment Head

- Contains the beam shaping, steering, and control components of the linear accelerator.



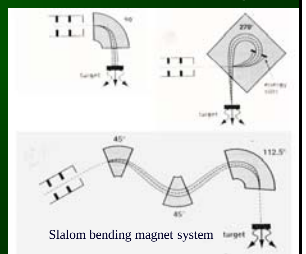


Components in Head

- Scattering Foils –to spread the beam
- Monitoring Chambers – to monitor
- Collimation System – fixed and movable
- X-Ray Target – transmission-type
- Flattening Filter –to produce a "flat" beam

Bending magnet

- projects the electron beam onto the target.
  - 90^0 - Simple, but elliptical focal spot
  - 270^0 - small FS, energy accuracy ± 5%, but Bulky
  - Salalom (112.5^0) – advantages of both , total bending 202.5^0.



Collimation Systems

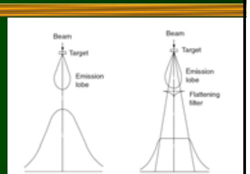
- Limiting the radiation beam
- Primary/fixed collimation
  - Cone-shaped, defines maximum field size
  - Depleted uranium/Tungsten
  - Transmission <0.2%
- Secondary/movable collimator
  - Transmission <2%
  - mounted on either side of the central axis
- Symmetric or asymmetric collimator

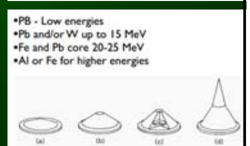
Multileaf collimators

- Many independent collimators
- Allow irregular field sizes
- to be delivered from the linear accelerator.
- 40–80 pairs of independent collimators
- Each leaf has its own motor

Flattening Filter

- Conical metal filter
  - situated between the target and the ionisation chamber.
  - Produce a uniform intensity distribution
  - Reduces the output on the central axis of the beam



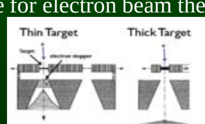


Flattening Filter Free Linac

- Removal of the FF results
  - Increase in dose rate (2 - 4 times higher)
  - Softening of the x-ray spectra
  - Shift in dmax
  - Reduction in head scattered radiation
  - Nonuniform beam profile.

X-ray target

- X-ray production
- up to 10 MeV, a thick tungsten target is employed,
- Thick aluminum target being used for energies greater than this.
- Retractable for electron beam therapy.



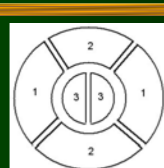
Suitable X-ray target

Electron Energy	Best Combination		Poor combination	
	Target	**FF**	**Target**	**FF**
<15 MeV	High Z	Low Z	High Z	High Z
= 15 MeV	High or Low Z	Low Z	High Z	High Z
> 15 MeV	Low Z	Low Z	High Z	High Z

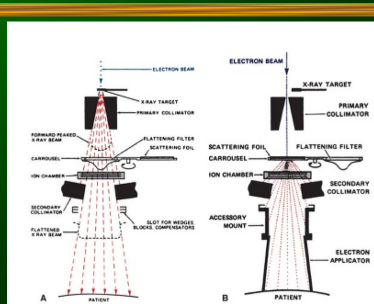
From Radiation Physics for Medical Physicists

Ionization Chamber

- Measures dose & Terminates the beam
  - After prescribed dose
  - if the energy, quality, flatness, or dose rate changes
  - Two chambers operate independently



X-rays & Electron Beam



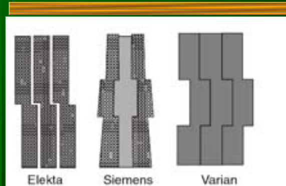
MLC

Types of MLC

Three main types

1. Type A - Siemens - Provides all the collimation replaces the standard collimation system
2. Type B - Elekta - Provides field shaping but additional shielding is provided by backup collimators. and replaces the standard collimation system
3. Type C – Varian - Provides field shaping in addition to the standard collimation system, externally mounted and complements the standard collimation system.

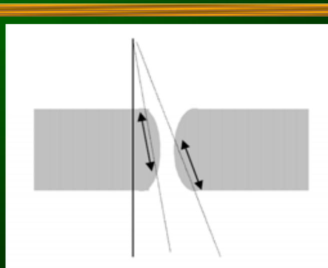
Comparison



Stepped leaves to reduce leakage

	Primary Collimator	Secondary Collimator	Tertiary Collimator
Elekta	focused MLC	focused block	none
Siemens	focused block	focused MLC	none
Varian	focused block	focused block	unfocused MLC

Transmission



The penetration through curved leaves is independent of leaf position.

Other facilities

- Electron cones
- Onboard imaging/EPID
- LASER
- Optical back pointer
- Shielding blocks
- Physical wedges, etc

Conclusion

- Choice of Equipment
- Complex, needs qualified and skilled staff
- Constantly developing to the needs of patients
- Uptime is high
- Require regulated power supply

References

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