
Zoom On: Prof. David Koff - Editorial Board Member Imaging



Prof. David Koff

Member of the Editorial Board

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David Koff, MD, FRPC, is Radiologist-in-Chief, Department of Diagnostic Imaging, Hamilton Health Sciences, Ontario, Canada; Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Radiology, McMaster University; Founder and Director, Medical Imaging Informatics Research Centre, McMaster University; Co-founder of RealTime Medical. We put our seven questions to him recently:

1. What are your key areas of interest and research?

I strongly believe in a world where health data will be communicated seamlessly and securely between multiple platforms, environments and countries, where medical images will be readily available to health professionals and patients on a variety of supports; evidence-based knowledge will be made available to support clinical decisions and treatments. To make the dream come true, we need to promote the use of standards and train a new generation of health informatics professionals, as well as engaging actively in research to invent the tools of tomorrow.

2. What are the major challenges in your field?

Lack of resources, lack of support and interest for research, but also lack of accountability and complacency.

3. What is your top management tip?

Express your vision clearly and don't try to do too much at a time, you'll face major push back. Progress step by step and stay the course.

4. What would you single out as a career highlight?

Reaching a leadership position that has allowed me to craft and implement a vision and strategy for my department. It is so rewarding when you see it working.

5. If you had not chosen this career path you would have become a...?

Diplomat.

6. What are your personal interests outside of work?

Visual arts - mainly painting, travelling, hiking.

7. Your favourite quote?

The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination (Albert Einstein).

A dual citizen of Canada and France, Professor Koff attained his medical degree and diagnostic radiology qualification at Rene-Descartes University Paris V, France. He began his radiology career in 1982 as Radiologist at the Partner Centre d'Imagerie Médical de Creil, Oise, France, where he expanded the service, and developed innovative delivery and partnership models.

Having worked in France on image exchange over the Internet and wavelet compression solutions, he wanted to bring these products to market. As Europe was not ready at this time for this type of solution, he moved to North America. Following his move to Canada in 1998 he founded Easy Pax, Inc. In Canada he also held clinical fellowships in Toronto, and worked at the Sunnybrook Research Institute, Sunnybrook Health Science Centre, the University of Toronto, Montreal Heart Institute and the Université de Montreal before moving to his current positions.

For the last 15 years, Prof. Koff's research has centred on the electronic communication and workflow integration of medical images. He helped develop the Canadian standards on lossy compression, co-founded IHE Canada (Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise), and is a member of the IHE section of the Medical Informatics committee at RSNA.

At McMaster, one of his initiatives is to promote research, and he says, "I am changing the course of research in our department, with a new open initiative designed to enrol as many radiologists as possible in evidence-based research around appropriateness of radiology studies and procedures, in order to come with up-to-date reliable recommendations for our referring physicians."

Professor Koff is actively involved in Canadian professional radiology activities. He is Chair and co-founder of the Canadian Coalition for Radiation & Medical Imaging Safety, chairs the Steering Committee of the Radiation Exposure Monitoring 2 project, is on the Expert panel on Appropriate Utilization of Diagnostic and Imaging Studies, chairs the Signpost Working Group, Canadian Association of Radiologists, a new workgroup to assess risks and opportunities for Canadian Radiology, chairs the Radiation Exposure Monitoring Advisory Panel, National Research Council, Equipment Lifecycle Committee, Canadian Association of Radiologists and has just completed his term as President of the Canadian Heads of Academic Radiology Departments. He is a member of the PACS/Teleradiology committee of the Canadian Association of Radiologists, and sits on the Partnership for Health Information Standards, DICOM expert group.

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