

Volume 5 - Issue 3,2006 - Partner News

An Association of University Radiologist in Europe

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Under the leadership of Professors Krestin, Ringertz, Dixon and others, an attempt has been made since 2000 to see if we, Europe-based academic radiology chairs, could benefit from regularly organised discussions with each other. These discussions would be on department management issues, financial

issues, residency and continuing medical education topics and the other concerns that we face day to day.

This leadership has resulted in an association, AUR-E, the Association of University Radiologists. It is loosely modelled on a similar umbrella organisation that has flourished in the USA since 1953.

Among organisations such as the ones for program directors in radiology and chief residents in radiology, the Society of Chairmen in Academic Radiology Departments (SCARD) is considered extremely useful for academic radiology chairs in the US. SCARD is a well-organized group that meets informally at RSNA, ARRS and formally twice a year at AUR and (this year) in Sonoma county, CA over the same weekend as MIR 2005. It considers and discusses exactly those issues that concern us here in the EU, such as insurance reimbursements, fellowship issues, competency of faculty and how to measure this.

According to Passariello et al., the formation of a European association of academic chairmen and chairwomen has been attempted in the past, but, like good wine, sometimes a process of maturation is needed. In the last four years our fledgling organisation has met at ECR and RSNA and found a more permanent place at meetings such as MIR and EuroPACS. Discussions around management issues, particularly PACS and digitalisation, as well as teleradiology issues, have taken place to the satisfaction of most present.

As an example, speakers at a recent meeting included: Prof. Dr. Hans Blickman (chair, Department of Radiology at UMC Nijmegen, Netherlands), who gave a comparison of issues facing heads of radiology departments in the USA and in the Netherlands. The comparison covered research, patient care and administrative issues. The conclusion was that some European ways of dealing with these might be of use to our American colleagues, particularly in the area of capitated medicine. On the other hand we, as European academic radiologists, might have something to learn about more clearly defining the position of an academic radiologist with regard to colleagues, timelines of care and service.

Subsequently, Dr. Peter Dawson (clinical director of Radiology, University Hospital London, UK) gave a very enlightening, occasionally humorous, but also serious talk about the National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom: what it is, how it works and how it should work. The conclusions were that NHS is not as bad as people, particularly on the other side of the Atlantic, might think it is, and that there are aspects of it that could be a model for healthcare reform in the USA.

Dr. Gabriel Krestin (chair, Department of Radiology, Erasmus Medical Centre Rotterdam, Netherlands) then summarised the research effort in Europe with regard to radiology. He spoke from the perspective of having studied in Germany, worked in Switzerland and of being chair of Radiology for more than five years in the Netherlands. He also has an extensive general knowledge of all things concerning research in radiology. A quick summary suggests that we can do better and that a number of American initiatives might be useful to consider for us here in Europe. On the other hand, bibliographical studies from 1995 to 2000

demonstrate a significantly stronger European radiology research expansion compared to that in the USA.

Informally, many chairpersons over the last few years have suggested we form such a chairman's group in the EU.

Should we wish to form such an association, it will be defined as follows: this Society shall be a non-profit organisation, the objectives of which shall be the advancement of the art and science of radiology by:

- the promotion of medical education, research and patient care;
- the development of methods of undergraduate and graduate teaching in radiology; and
- the provision of a forum for discussion of problems of mutual interest among radiology department chairpersons.

All departments of radiology that have accredited radiology residency programmes are eligible for membership. Each department shall be represented by its chair, acting chair and/or cochair.

We urge you to come and discuss forming such an association, give it a proper name and plan to get together so as to strengthen our position and our field for the future in Copenhagen at MIR 2005!

Published on : Thu, 20 Apr 2006