

ECR 2014: ESR Focus on Radiation Protection



Radiation protection is a key concern of the European Society of Radiology (ESR), and Professor Peter Vock, Chair of the ESR Working Group on Radiation Protection, updated the Management in Radiology session on its activities at the recent European Congress of Radiology in Vienna.

Vock outlined the critical three new dimensions of radiation protection:

Global - Personalised - Safe

Global means a holistic approach to radiation protection, to include referral, appropriateness, scheduling, standard protocols and optimisation, involvement of medical physicists through to recording of doses and reporting.

Personalised refers to a patient-centric approach.

Safe includes clinical audits, communication of dose indices in Europe, dose tracking of individual patient, web-based dose information access provided to physicians and individualised patient protection based on dose repository

These dimensions are included alongside the classical three dimensions of justification, limitation and optimisation.

The ALARA (As Low as Reasonably Achievable) Principle for optimisation has received a lot of attention, noted Vock, but it remains a challenge. Technical innovation requires reconsideration of optimisation rules.

The fourth dimension of radiation protection is education and training. Vock acknowledged that there are deficits in training, lack of clearly defined learning objectives and task-driven training. Following the EC project 'Medrapet' the guidelines are integrated into the European Training Curriculum for radiology.

The fifth dimension is research. Vock stated that a strategic research agenda for medical radiation protection is needed, integrating basic and applied research.

The sixth dimension is communication, and the launch of the EuroSafe imaging campaign is key. The campaign will include congress sessions, posters, radiation protection e-learning modules, patient involvement and interdisciplinary cooperation.

Vock concluded by saying that radiation protection is critical for the European Society of Radiology. The medical workforce expects a holistic approach and it is time to go beyond working on optimisation and limitation by developing education and training and conducting research. Communication is a prerequisite for the wider application of radiation protection in Europe.

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