

ECR 2014: Radiology in Europe - How Are We Doing?



The outlook for radiology in Europe is not all gloomy, but there are wide variations in staffing and reimbursement, according to a survey of European Society of Radiology (ESR) member national societies.

Professor Elisabeth Schouman-Claeys from Paris, France, presented insights from the recent survey at the Management in Radiology session at the European Congress of Radiology on Saturday.

The survey was circulated to 43 national societies, with 32 responses received (73%).

Most radiology in Europe is publicly funded (88%), in line with OECD data, which shows that 75% of healthcare in Europe is paid from public funds.

In 72% of countries, more than 60% of radiologists were employed by the state. More than half of respondent countries said that there were limits on access to radiology due to central funding and availability. Encouragingly, more than half of respondent countries said that the national radiological society had influence or an active role in regulatory bodies. These bodies included those that regulated education and training, reimbursement and finance. Cyprus and Germany were the only two countries from those that responded with no regulatory body, Israel alone had a bonus system for avoiding unnecessary imaging.

62% of countries had too few radiologists, while 58% said there was not enough training. Schouman-Claeys called this a persistent and rather stable deficit. 15 countries had too few radiologists, while two had sufficient numbers, but not enough training.

Asked about the main challenges the top five were:

1. Workload
2. Ageing equipment
3. Shortage of staff
4. Turf battle
5. Diminishing reimbursement.

Pricing schedules varied widely, with higher fees for reading in the private sector.

Schouman-Claeys emphasised that these results are indicative, and stand as at the date of the presentation. Although the situation is challenging, she suggested that there were opportunities to change management of radiology departments.

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