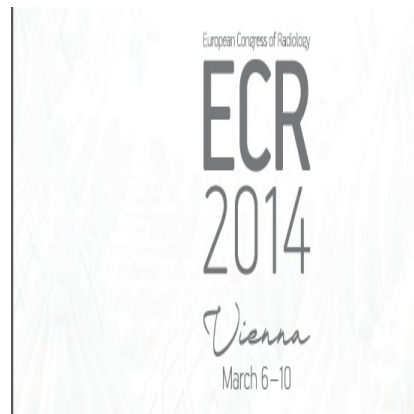




ECR 2014: Radiology Opportunities and Threats



Radiology's visibility is a hot topic of discussion these days, and a well-attended Professional Challenges session looked at opportunities and threats to the radiology profession. Professor Georg Bongartz from Switzerland gave a clear message - radiologists must share their turf. Fences do not protect the turf, and turf battles should be regarded as challenges, where radiologists can demonstrate their expertise.

Professor Adrian Dixon from the UK outlined the role of education in beating threats to radiology, right through from teaching undergraduates to the importance of lifelong learning. Now that radiology is the 'front of house' of medicine, he urged radiologists to show medical students how difficult it is, and make students realise the value of an expert opinion. Trainee doctors should be encouraged to 'request' rather than 'order' imaging investigations, said Dixon. He added that radiologists are in 'pole position' for clinicroadiological meetings. He ended by quoting golfer Gary Player "The more I practise, the luckier I get."

Professor Lorenzo Derchi from Italy covered the cautionary tale of ultrasound. "The relationship between radiology and ultrasound has never been an easy love story and still is not", he said. Many radiologists have considered US as a poor relation of CT and MR. The takeover of US by other doctors has somehow been helped by the fact that radiologists have not always been readily available for timely examinations and reports. Derchi noted the decreased number of publications on US in the three major radiology journals, as well as a reduced number of presentations at conferences. Young radiologists considered US stressful due to the number of requests and direct contact with patients. Reading studies was considered to be easier. He urged support for US for radiation protection reasons and to promote the visibility of radiologists. The future of US offers exciting research opportunities, for example contrast-enhanced ultrasound and 3D/4D ultrasound and elastography. He noted the importance of investing in US technology in order to stay at the forefront of US.

Prof. Max Reiser from Germany talked about cooperating with other disciplines without losing radiology's identity. He noted the paradigm shift whereby the experts come to the patient, not the patients to the specialists, with the growth of multidisciplinary centres. The subspecialties of various medical disciplines have to cooperate to achieve excellent results for the patient. Critical factors for interdisciplinary cooperation are training, cost-effective use of equipment, reimbursement issues and career development for radiologists. Cooperation was valuable to avoid giving contradictory opinions to patients. Radiologists can learn from experts of other disciplines. Radiology as a discipline can be safeguarded by implementing guidelines and standard operating procedures, he suggested.

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