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Education and Training of Radiologists:The Turkish Perspective

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Medical doctors in Turkey graduate after following a six-year curriculum. According to set programmes, different concepts are used to teach radiological issues. Since 1996, most schools of medicine have been adapting their conventional curriculum to more modern programmes, such as problem-based learning where the students naturally learn radiology in the context of daily medical practice. Radiology has also been used to facilitate learning of human anatomy in these schools.

The Turkish Perspective

Since the topics of medical imaging are discussed related to problems and diseases, radiology permeates all aspects of medical programmes. In programmes where conventional strategies have been used, there are usually many lectures concentrated during the first years and usually there is a month-long clerkship course during the fifth year of medical school.

Residency

To achieve residency, physicians must enter a central exam. The preferences of candidates and their exam performances are the main criteria used to select residents for these programmes. A five-year radiology training period is mandatory all over the country and is administered by the Ministry of Health.

In total there are 67 institutes commissioned to run these programmes. 64 % of the institutes responsible for postgraduate education are represented by university departments. However, the number and distribution of academics are not in balance. Institutes had been applying their own curriculums before the Turkish Association of Radiology declared a core radiology curriculum in 2005. This core curriculum mainly follows the European Society of Radiology's curriculum.

Basic and advanced courses are encouraged and the minimum period of time for each modality and subspecialty is given with the curriculum. The association also recommends the use of a standardised assistant log book. In more than half of the departments these recommendations were accepted by the end of 2007.

The basic requirements in infrastructure and the qualitative standards for trainers were defined by the related committees of the Turkish Association of Radiology. However, not all the institutes have the optimum conditions and the accreditation processes are in early stages.

According to the state's directives, all residents have to be assessed in six-month intervals. The assessment methods may vary in every department but each resident has to complete a research work that is evaluated at the end of the training period. Final evaluation is made by an oral examination before graduation. The Turkish Ministry of Health gives these diplomas and no additional evaluated or quality confirmation is needed to commence professional practice.

The Turkish Radiology Association & Education

The Turkish Association of Radiology founded a Board of Radiology in 2002. At the beginning, more than a hundred academics and trainers were trained in measurement and assessment methods in written and oral exams. After a trial examination in each step with volunteers, exams were performed once every year. The second step examination is dedicated to the assessment of professional skills and cognitive skills like interpretation, differential diagnosis and clinical reasoning as well as the motor skills of the radiologists in areas such as performing ultrasonography. Certification is valid for five years and radiologists are recertificated if a certain amount of CME credit is collected in the end of this period.

Residents in most of the institutions are responsible for on-call operations, and emergency unit rotations are included in the training programmes. Nuclear medicine, internal medicine and radiation oncology rotates for three months and each is mandatory according to the official rules. Subspecialty training is not officially accepted but in many institutions training is organised according to an organ-system basis and residents are equipped with the basics of these subspecialties.

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