



ESR/ISR Join Forces on Patient Safety in Paediatric Imaging Event

Imaging for Saving Kids -

the Inside Story about Patient Safety in Paediatric Radiology



The International Society of Radiology (ISR) and the European Society of Radiology (ESR) collaborated with the WHO, four WHO member states and eight NGOs in an event focusing on patient safety in paediatric radiology. Dubbed "Imaging for Saving Kids - the Inside Story about Patient Safety in Paediatric Radiology", the event was held on the sideline of the annual World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva.

The event provided a forum for policymakers, healthcare providers, equipment manufacturers, and patients to discuss what could be done to maximise the benefits and minimise the risks when using medical imaging in paediatric patients.

Medical imaging enables earlier diagnosis and offers less invasive treatment for sick children. There is increasing evidence, however, that children are more vulnerable to ionising radiation-related health risks — eg, x-ray exposure during CT scans. Whenever appropriate, medical imaging without ionising radiation has to be used, such as ultrasound or MRI. Good communication with the patient and carers facilitates informed decision-making and minimises procedure delay or refusal due to unfounded concerns.

During the session, the participants noted that improvement in patient safety in paediatric radiology requires multidisciplinary teamwork, collaboration and an integrated framework for actions covering research, advocacy, education, infrastructure, and evidence-informed policy. To improve the performance of practitioners, facilities, and healthcare systems, suggested actions include: implementing the 10 priorities identified in the Bonn call-for-action¹; taking into account the ICRP recommendations on radiation protection in medicine; increasing access to imaging procedures; improving appropriate use of paediatric imaging by policies, providing guidance and tools, and ensuring practitioner education and training.

In addition, both facility-based and system-wide actions are needed for the establishment and maintenance of a radiation safety culture in paediatric imaging. Integration avoids duplication and promotes synergy.

The WHO plays an important role in facilitating and coordinating improvement actions in different regions and settings. The ISR, as a confederation of around 80 national and regional radiological societies, is committed to improving the access to safe and more appropriate use of paediatric imaging throughout the world and is working with other stakeholders on this priority.

Reference

1. The Bonn call-for-action identified 10 priority actions to improve radiation protection in medicine. Available at http://www.who.int/ionizing_radiation/medical_exposure/bonncallforaction2014.pdf

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