

How Europeans Use PPE in Ultrasound Varies Widely



According to a recent study published in *Insights into Imaging*, European radiologists providing face-to-face ultrasound services widely vary in their use of personal protective equipment (PPE). The current risks of COVID-19 exposure without PPE make this a concern for radiologists. According to a report by the Radiology Section of the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS) some radiologists were providing services without PPE. Thus, to determine the extent of this issue, the Radiology Section of UEMS surveyed PPE use among European radiologists that provide face-to-face ultrasound services.

Specifically, the survey was sent to representatives of the Radiology Section of the UEMS. There were 46 respondents from 30 European countries. PPE questions dealt with use by patients, doctors, and determining the status of COVID-19 infection.

The respondents reported that all radiologists wore masks when dealing with COVID-19 positive patients – 12 wore surgical masks, 18 wore FFP2 masks, and 16 wore FFP3 masks. Most used goggles (37), face shields (38), gowns (44), and gloves (45). Plastic screen use was low (9).

For COVID-19 asymptomatic patients, masks were worn by doctors – consisting of surgical face masks (29), FFP2 (6) and FFP3 (21). Two respondents reported that doctors did not wear a face mask during appointments. Other PPE included goggles (21), face shields (20), and gowns (27). However, the some researcher also noted that “some” healthcare workers in the medical imaging department would use no PPE when scanning COVID-19 asymptomatic patients.

To determine whether asymptomatic patients were COVID-19 negative, 18 required PCR testing and 29 required a questionnaire before or at the appointment (0 to 1 days before). Only three required a PCR if the questionnaire was positive. No PCR or questionnaire was required by 10 of the respondents.

In this survey, only 11 of the 30 countries had national guidelines on PPE use when performing face-to-face services. The study authors conclude that ‘is room for harmonisation on a European level with regard to the recommended use of personal protective equipment for healthcare professionals providing face-to-face ultrasound services.’ Furthermore, ‘a paragraph on personal protective equipment’ should be added to position statements and best practice recommendations when standards in ultrasound are revised.

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