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Key Advantages of New Staff Monitoring Tools: Maximising Efficiency to Cope with Increased Demand

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Radiology Gains Workflow Benefits

Last year's RIS/PACS (Sectra) implementation in the radiology department at Leiden University Medical Centre (LUMC) has enabled significant workflow benefits. One of the key cost control issues in the department is, of course, maintaining a motivated and proactive team of staff members with as low a turnover as possible. The advent of PACS, and in particular, the Control Tower, has allowed us to monitor and streamline not only patient flow through the department, but also to access real-time data on staff productivity so as to improve staff performance.

A Supportive Environment for Employees

One of the functions I share as radiology manager with the medical manager is staff management. Selecting and retaining the right personnel for the department as well as maintaining a highly developed personnel policy that includes aspects such as 'management skills development' are primary points of focus for us. We try to assess each staff member's role, as well as asking in what ways they are looking to expand their career in the future, and trying to match this with our department's growing needs. Promoting a dynamic staff morale is a key goal of the department. Sectra Control Tower makes real-time monitoring possible in areas such as per-doctor output levels and waiting times for each modality. I use this data to create a limited number of standard reports for the section heads and other employees with managerial responsibilities. On top of that Control Tower gives technicians and radiologists direct access to their data, empowering them to visualise their contribution to the team and to make reports that are useful for their area of interest.

High Demanding Referring Physicians and Efficiency

At Leiden, we are experiencing the same financial pressure as radiology departments across Europe. Although we have no shortage of technicians and doctors at this moment, demands for CT and MR are increasing out of all proportion. This is despite stagnant budgets not increasing to match heightened demand. Only by increasing operational efficiency can we address these challenges.

Waiting Lists and Patient Management

In the Netherlands many hospitals have long waiting lists for CT and MRI exams. These patients are divided into three obvious categories: emergency patients who are seen as quickly as possible, inpatients who must be seen the same day or at the latest, the very next day, and finally outpatients referred e.g. by a neurologist, who may end up waiting for months to have their exams. For these non-urgent cases, the processing times are quite long. There are, in my opinion, two solutions to this. The first solution is that we increase capacity, purchasing more machines and hiring more staff, as well as offering a 24/7/365 service. However, this is quite cost-intensive! The second, more cost-effective solution, is to make the most of the resources already at hand, by making the hospital's technicians and radiologists responsible for their own output. By providing them access to the Control Tower reports where they can easily check their precise productivity data and the utilization rate of individual modalities, we can empower the employees to optimise their own efficiency, and thus increase the productivity of the department.

Key Advantages

One of the key advantages is that the solution is entirely customisable. The solution was upgraded a few weeks ago to fit our needs – for example in the Netherlands a Dutch radiologist called Sanders has developed a points system that is commonly used to show how much work a doctor has done, measured in units known as 'Sanders-points'. We were pleased to discover that Sectra can integrate this into the Control Tower solution.

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Finally, the greatest advantage offered by the solution is that by sharing the information produced in the department, we can inspire staff members and others in the department to monitor and manage their own productivity and output. Control Tower is a management tool that enables utilizing intelligent data access for maximising productivity in the radiology department, resulting in increased staff satisfaction and, ultimately, patient satisfaction.

Facts & Figures

LUMC comprises Leiden University Hospital and the Faculty of Medicine of Leiden University. The LUMC, which employs approximately 7000 people, is one of several academic medical centres in the Netherlands. The core tasks of the LUMC are:

- Patient care: routine care, highlevel clinical care, and in particular, high-level reference care.
- Research: both fundamental and bedside, healthcare-oriented research.
- Education for the faculties of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.
- Training for residents to become medical specialists
- Training for paramedics, such as nurses and technicians
- Additional training, both post-doctoral and post-vocational.

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