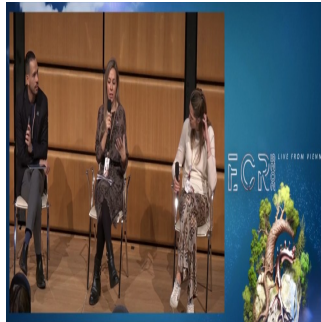

Patient Engagement in Breast Imaging: a Paradigm Shift



Patient engagement in breast imaging is undergoing a significant transformation, moving beyond a purely clinical focus to a more patient-centred approach. At the European Congress of Radiology session on this topic, three experts explored different aspects of patient engagement—shared decision-making, patient comfort and the role of social media in radiology. Their insights highlighted the need for radiologists to take an active role in improving communication, reducing patient anxiety and leveraging digital tools to enhance the patient experience.

Empowering Choices: Shared and Informed Decision-Making in Breast Imaging and Beyond

Caroline Justich highlighted the critical role of shared decision-making in breast imaging. She emphasised that for many patients, a breast cancer diagnosis is their first encounter with the medical system, making clear, empathetic communication essential. She stressed that radiologists should take a more active role in guiding patients through their diagnosis, helping them make informed choices while considering their emotional and psychological state.

She shared her personal experience with a Stage 4 breast cancer diagnosis, explaining how a radiologist played a key role in supporting her during the initial shock. *"This will be your roller coaster ride. There will be ups, there will be downs and certainly there will be loops. Just hold on,"* she recalled being told, which gave her a sense of perspective and resilience. She also pointed out that many patients feel lost after receiving a diagnosis and that radiologists should ensure they are directed to the appropriate next steps in their care.

Additionally, Caroline underscored the importance of increasing breast screening attendance, particularly in countries where participation rates remain low. She advocated for implementing digital solutions to improve patient support and urged radiologists to embrace their evolving role in patient care.

Comfort and Care: Valuing Patient Experience in Breast Imaging Procedures

Rodrigo Alcantara Souza focused on the need to prioritise patient comfort and emotional well-being in breast imaging procedures. He noted that fear, discomfort and anxiety often discourage women from attending follow-up appointments, which can impact early detection and treatment outcomes. He emphasised that *"the first conversation sets the tone for the entire patient experience,"* meaning radiologists and staff must approach each interaction with empathy and clarity.

He outlined several strategies to improve patient experience, including reducing waiting times, providing clear pre-procedure explanations and using patient-friendly educational tools such as brochures and videos. He highlighted that anxiety before a biopsy can heighten the perception of pain, making psychological reassurance an essential component of care.

Rodrigo also discussed practical methods for minimising physical discomfort, such as optimising local anaesthesia techniques and using strategies like buffering lidocaine to reduce injection pain. He pointed out that radiologists should refine their expertise in pain management, as even small improvements can significantly impact patient perception and willingness to return for follow-ups.

From Pixels to Patients: Leveraging Social Media for Enhanced Engagement and Radiologist Outreach

Myriam Montes Montés Fernández explored how social media can be a powerful tool for patient engagement and radiologist visibility. She explained that many patients seek health information online, making social media an essential platform for education and outreach. *"Social media is now one of the preferred venues for obtaining health information and community support with as many as 80% of users seeking health information online today,"* she noted, highlighting the need for professionals to be active in these spaces.

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She described the advantages of different social media platforms for radiologists, from professional networking on LinkedIn to patient education on Instagram and YouTube. She shared her personal experience using Instagram to connect with patients, providing insights into their concerns and expectations.

Myriam also warned about the dangers of misinformation online, playing an example of a video spreading harmful myths about mammography. She stressed that radiologists have a responsibility to counteract false claims by providing reliable, evidence-based content. Finally, she encouraged radiologists to embrace social media as a way to improve patient trust, stating that *"when using social media for your patients, you don't need to go viral, you need to be useful for your patients."*

The session reinforced the idea that radiologists play a crucial role in shaping the patient experience beyond image interpretation. From informed decision-making and comfort measures to digital engagement, their involvement can improve trust, adherence to screening programmes and overall patient outcomes. Radiologists must adapt to evolving patient needs by prioritising communication, empathy and accessibility, ensuring that breast imaging is not only effective but also patient-centred.

Source: [ECR 2025](#)

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