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Profile of the Canadian Association of Radiologists

The Canadian Association of Radiologists (CAR) is the national voice of radiology committed to maintaining the highest standards of care, promoting patient safety and helping radiologists contribute to the very best healthcare for patients. The CAR is particularly active on three fronts:

- Working with governments, health professionals and technology leaders to make optimal use of diagnostic imaging.
- Serving as the voice of Canadian radiology so that governments, the public and news media are fully informed about the benefits and risks of diagnostic imaging, the challenges faced and the solutions the CAR proposes.
- Creating, accrediting and promoting opportunities for continuing medical education and research.

An important part of the CAR's focus on quality is the development of diagnostic imaging referral guidelines, which assist physicians in ordering the most appropriate imaging test for patients. The association recognises that for maximal effect, guidelines must be a seamless part of the physician's regular workflow and thus guidelines have been integrated into a computerised order entry (CPOE) system for diagnostic imaging. The goal is to include guidelines as a part of every RIS and CPOE in every healthcare system in Canada. The CAR is part of an international committee, in cooperation with the International Radiology Quality Network (IRQN), creating international guidelines that can also be adapted to developing countries, for presentation to the World Health Organisation (WHO). The CAR held its first national guidelines symposium in 2009 and an international guidelines symposium in 2010 in Montréal.

Accreditation Programmes

The accreditation of imaging facilities, equipment and staff is an important part of ensuring quality healthcare. The association currently provides quality accreditation services through its mammography accreditation programme, which has been in operation for 15 years. It currently accredits over 600 units, and has introduced accreditation of digital mammography. The CAR has also launched a bone mineral densitometry programme in 2010 and plans to expand its accreditation services in the years ahead. As part of its quality assurance (QA) services, the CAR develops evidencebased standards that define principles of practice to obtain the best radiological results. The CAR continues to update its standards and introduce new ones.

Education

The CAR supports lifelong learning for radiologists by acting as an accrediting agent of continuing medical education events on behalf of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and holding its own continuing medical education (CME)/continuing professional development (CPD) events each year. The CAR's biggest educational event is its Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM). The 2011 CAR ASM will be held in collaboration with the Société canadienne-française de radiologie in Montréal from April 28 to May 1, 2011, with a theme of Image Wisely – Image with Care.

Communications and Stakeholders

The association produces a dedicated CAR Journal four to five times per year, within which there is the opportunity to earn CME credits. An updated website (www.car.ca) is to be launched to augment the association's position as the source for radiology information in Canada. The CAR will expand its communications to members and stakeholders with a quarterly e-publication that not only contains news from the CAR, but from its provincial association colleagues and articles of interest with a national and international perspective. The CAR creates educational materials for medical professionals and/or the public. One such item introduced in 2009 was its "Do you need that scan?" brochure, which educates the public and healthcare providers about radiation exposure. The Canadian Radiological Foundation (CRF) is the charitable arm of the CAR. The CAR and CRF are committed to continuing research that is critical to improve healthcare for Canadians.

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