

Radiologists Need to Embrace the Unknown



According to a recent editorial published in the Journal of the American College of Radiology, radiology educators need to stop being too reliant on the known and should consider embracing the unknown.

The article, co-authored by Christian W. Cox, MD, of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., and Richard B. Gunderman, MD, PhD, of Indiana University in Indianapolis, emphasises on the fact that radiologists focus too much on the known and should strive to learn that which is unknown since every question does not have a clear answer.

The authors express concern that due to this limited way of thinking, radiologists could form bad habits and could be confined to a learning experience where all questions have a right answer and then many wrong answers. This could hinder the radiologist's ability to ask complex questions and could also blunt their curiosity.

"Simply put, we need to teach the unknown—the fact that all radiologists, even the leaders in the field, encounter questions every day to which they do not know the answer," Cox and Gunderman wrote. "Consider, for example, the often unquestioning use of the term 'idiopathic.' To recognise and address only questions to which the correct answer is known would be to stop expanding the envelope of radiological knowledge."

The authors suggest that medical studies and trainees should be presented with more cases to which the correct answers have not yet been determined. They should also be encouraged to ask questions about intriguing cases. This would enable them to explore further and work towards identifying approaches that could help them understand things better and get more answers.

"Those who cannot admit the limits of their own knowledge fall victim to pretending that they know something they really don't, simply to save face," Cox and Gunderman wrote. "The intellectual integrity of the field hinges in part on the resistance of radiologists to sustaining a façade of perfection, even and perhaps especially when it is most tempting to do so."

Source: [Journal of the American College of Radiology](#)
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