

Radiology: What the Future Holds



By Dr. Rowland Illing, Affidea Chief Medical Officer

The healthcare industry as a whole has become increasingly sub-specialised, some would say fragmented. Many more healthcare professionals are involved in each patient's care than in the past and this has both advantages and disadvantages. Amidst the complexity, there is a risk of losing focus on the patient. As with all advanced healthcare practices, the trend in radiology will, or at the very least should, tend towards a patient-centred approach to care provision. Coordinating such a vast system of referral, diagnosis, treatment and recovery therapy is a complex job in itself. The personal touch is all too easily forgotten. Services are delivered in a way that fits the system, rather than with actual patient needs.



The human factor in providing healthcare services

The challenge for the future will not be in advancing technology even further, that progress is well under way. Rather the challenge is to re-orientate today's healthcare around the patient and develop treatments, therapies and processes that provide a holistic solution to their given healthcare needs.

In terms of radiology and radiotherapy, this means a great many things – first of all, gathering data. Many of our sources for developing new treatments are decades old, carried out in vastly different circumstances using vastly different equipment. These data banks need to be complemented by research and high-volume case studies, which are up-to-date. Only research backed by solid numbers in terms of practice, will have any place in progressing treatment in the medical field. It is for this reason that [Affidea](#) is setting up the Affidea Foundation, to utilise its vast network of 170 centres, the day-to-day data gathered there and all the specialist research carried out, both in-house and as part of multi-disciplinary specialist teams, by our own radiologists.



Patient friendly environment

Patient-centred care also means rethinking the entire running of a centre from the patient's perspective, to make it more efficient with less time wasted and no repeated steps (such as repeatedly taking patient details). On a medical level, the biggest advance towards patient-centred care has been the recent shift in focus to [managing and optimising dose levels in diagnostic treatments that use ionising radiation](#). But there are other areas of focus – the word care providing the key – we cannot ignore the human factor in providing healthcare services, with the respect and consideration that that implies. How we communicate with patients will determine their understanding of their condition and therefore the success of their future progress.



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