

Take the Effective Communication Quiz



COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Radiology reports are increasingly becoming more accessible to patients. As such, radiologists need to write well to engage and educate patients through imaging reports, without creating offense or confusion, according to an article published in *Journal of the American College of Radiology*. To help radiologists improve their communication skills, the article discusses the five essential components of effective communication: complete, concise, concrete, clear, and correct.

What's more, the article includes a short quiz designed to evaluate the strength of your communication skills.

Complete Communication

Complete communication takes into consideration who the receiver is and what is relevant to the receiver. A useful report for an oncologist, for example, details whether some or all lesions responded to treatment, whereas a surgeon would need detailed anatomic information to plan a surgical approach. The goal is to ensure that the receiver has all the necessary and relevant facts for informed decision making.

Complete communication is also important in conversations with patients, which should be tailored to key findings, using everyday terms and helpful metaphors without overloading patients with excessive detail and medical jargon.

Concise Communication

Convey the message in the fewest words possible while maintaining accurate content. This method is important for both written and verbal communication. Clinicians view radiology reports with lengthy, complex sentences negatively because long sentences correlate with a low readability index and reduced clarity.

Previous research shows that only 38 percent of referring clinicians read the entire radiology report. As one clinician stated: "An internist has 12 minutes with a patient and can't take 20 minutes to read a radiology report."

Concrete Communication

Vague reporting can lead to delays in diagnosis and potentially to malpractice cases. Concrete communication is specific, distinct, supported by facts and features, and promotes appropriate action by clinicians.

Avoid ambiguous statements such as: "Clinical correlation recommended." Instead, use more-specific terms, such as: "Recommend correlation with serial beta-hCG levels and follow up with ultrasound in two weeks."

Clear Communication

The following list provides tips for clear communication:

1. Organise and prioritise thoughts prior to communicating.
2. Emphasise a specific message.
3. Avoid ambiguous abbreviations.

Correct Communication

Communication must be accurate, timely, and correct in terms of vocabulary and grammar. As part of the medical record, the radiology report may be dissected in malpractice litigation. Proofreading for grammatical, spelling, and typographic errors decreases the risk and incidence of malpractice lawsuits.

Source: [American College of Radiology](#)

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Published on : Tue, 17 Nov 2015