

## The Invisible Radiologist in the AI Era



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What radiologists must do to remain visible to patients, radiologists at the University of Crete and University of Ioannina discuss in a recent article in the [European Journal of Radiology](#).

In times past, radiologists worked in the background, invisible to the patient. During the second half of the past century, clinical training and function propelled by Interventional Radiology and Medical Imaging's evolution upgraded their status as physicians. Thus, they began participating in patients' diagnoses and treatment through direct contact and multidisciplinary medical consultations.

Teleradiology's development in response to market pressures and availability of the advances in connectivity technology threaten to push radiologists back into the background. Teleradiology offers the advantages of urgent after-hours reporting, workload augmentation, and easy consultation. However, disadvantageous are many. Few radiologists are available to teach residents, optimise protocols, interact with referring physicians, or perform procedures requiring a physical presence. The physical absence can cause a lack of influence in hospital administration and affect equipment investment. Furthermore, the radiologist can rely only on the history and information provided by the referring physician—this can create a lack of context that affects the interpretation. Thus, the danger is that the radiologist will treat the MRI rather than the patient.

Routine imaging interpretation is subjective, based on qualitative features according to the established knowledge. Accurate pattern recognising algorithms have created new expectations from imaging studies since they can often process information missed by human eyes. PACS's wide use and digitalisation of medical data was a significant step forward in facilitating algorithm use. Consequently, the radiologist's role can change from 'doing perceptual things to doing far more cognitive things.' Thus, AI is now being adopted to increase radiologists' efficiency rather than AI replacing them. Radiologists, in turn, are advised to acquire skills for proper function in the rising AI professional environment. Adaptability will be a crucial soft skill required.

To avoid becoming invisible, radiologist-patient relationships need to be established to increase visibility and communicate findings. This approach can increase patient trust and satisfaction but also require time.

**Source:** [European Journal of Radiology](#)

Published on : Fri, 7 Jan 2022