Experts to look into quality of care in clinical radiology

In recent years, the need for quality assessment and quality assurance in radiology has moved to the forefront. In today’s ESR Patient Advisory Group session, experts and representatives of patient organisations will assess the situation and discuss different strategies to improve patient safety and quality of care in clinical radiology.

BY KATHARINA MIEDZINSKA

Medical imaging saves lives every day and is indispensable in patient-centred care. During the past two decades, the use of medical imaging to visualise and help diagnose illness and injuries to guide complex therapeutic interventions has expanded greatly, so that nowadays, patients with a wide spectrum of physical complaints benefit from different imaging procedures.

Radiology is very much seen as a service provider, and as such, its practitioners need to understand quality and delivery of service, including knowledge of customer service and satisfaction, quality assurance and improvement issues.

In this context, radiologists should bear in mind that they do not sell images, but essential diagnostic information and advice, and that by getting involved with patients, and by providing an interpretation of their images within the context of the situation, they can have a positive influence on the patient’s experience in various ways.

Considering a patient’s journey through different medical departments is going to be one of the main focuses of today’s ESR-PAG session, which will be chaired by Dr. Nicola Bedlington, Executive Director of the European Patients’ Forum, and Dr. Barry Kelly, Consultant Radiologist at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, UK.

“Many of us as doctors suddenly become aware when we are patients, that the once familiar territory of our hospitals can suddenly seem forbidding, stressful, efficiencies or even uncaring,” noted Kelly. “If this is how it can seem to professionals who find themselves on the other side of the white coats, how much more profound and intimidating must it be for our fellow citizens, who have no experience of such technological, sterile and busy environments?”

In particular, three tools, which have been designed to promote a compassionate, comprehensive and personal experience for patients will be discussed, including the patient satisfaction questionnaire; a driver diagram, which is being used to conceptualise an issue and determine its system components, thus creating a pathway to achieving the goal of patient-centred care; and audit, which, according to Kelly, measures something against an agreed standard.

“As radiological healthcare professionals, we tend to think of this as being process-driven. This is an important component, but audit can and should also be used to measure our interaction with each other and with our patients. By doing this, we ensure that a patient-centred approach leads to a safe, professional and harmonious institution,” he said.

In this session, Kelly will be joined by Dr. Dominique-Celard Carné, from the department of radiology and medical imaging at Polyclinique du Parc, Toulouse, France, who will specifically discuss how to implement a patient satisfaction questionnaire in radiology departments.

“Let’s take better care of the patients we care for, and improve our sense of work well done and help us to assure higher quality service,” he concluded.

To illuminate the topic from every particular angle, Europa Uomo Ex Office Board Member Erik Brière, PhD, and Executive Director of the European Federation of Neurological Associations, Ms. Denna Walsh, will discuss patient safety and quality of care from the patient’s perspective by using examples of good and bad radiology practice from relevant disease areas, and more importantly, by dealing with the issue of information transfer.

ESR delegates will learn that a fair knowledge of an upcoming procedure is an important part of feeling safe for the patient and that an overload of information is equally detrimental to a safe feeling as no information. In their presentations, Brière and Walsh plan to illustrate that implementing the driver diagram in a department is a step-by-step process that can be monitored by patients, and analyse the potential phases of patient involvement, including ways to identify the most relevant patient-reported measures and possibilities to collect and analyse patient-generated evidence.

The session will close with a panel discussion on the central question: “Does your department perform well in patient-centred care?”

ESR Patient Advisory Group Session

Saturday, March 4, 10:30–12:00, Room L 8
ESR-PAG | Improving patient safety and quality of care in clinical radiology

- Chairpersons’ introduction: N. Bedlington; Vienna/AT
- B.E. Kelly; Belfast/UK
- The work of the ESR Audit & Standards Subcommittee in collaboration with ESR-PAG: B.E. Kelly; Belfast/UK
- Patient’s perspective: D. Walsh; Dublin/IE
- E. Brière; Hasselt/BE
- Example of good practice: implementing a patient satisfaction questionnaire in your radiology department: D.-G. Carné; Toulouse/FR
- Panel discussion: Does your department perform well in patient-centred care?

This session is part of the EuroSafe Imaging campaign.