

## Statement on Teleoperations

The **European Federation of Radiographer Societies (EFRS)** and the **International Society of Radiographers & Radiological Technologists (ISRRT)** are increasingly aware of the tremendous technological advances currently impacting patient care and the profession. One such advance is the ability to operate imaging technologies remotely, often referred to as ‘teleoperations’. The EFRS and the ISRRT acknowledge that there is potential for significant growth in this area. This is particularly relevant for facilities and countries where there may be a significant distance between the imaging equipment (typically CT and MRI scanners) and the radiographer, or where Radiographers/Radiological Technologists in the field wish to seek advice from more experienced colleagues located elsewhere. Both stakeholders also recognize that teleoperation can play a role in student training and application/technical support from equipment manufacturers.

In defining a safe landscape for effective teleoperation, we continue to work with national societies and other organizations, healthcare providers, industry, and patient advocates. Our main aim is to establish an evidence base and framework for the safe use of teleoperations, and to inform policy on its use. We believe that Radiographers/Radiological Technologists must be at the center of patient care; remote teleoperations will be a valuable solution in some cases, but it must be appropriately regulated and only used where a traditional model of direct interaction between patient-radiographer interaction is not possible. Regardless of the role of teleoperation, the EFRS and the ISRRT affirm that Radiographers/Radiological Technologists must and will continue to play a key role in all areas of medical imaging, nuclear medicine and radiotherapy.

Both stakeholders advocate that any procedure should be carried out by both trained and qualified remote and onsite Radiographers/Radiological Technologists in close contact and communication with each other. Current national legislation must be followed and authorized personnel must not be replaced by unqualified professionals. Although teleoperations are considered an alternative practice model, they must not compromise

quality and safety. Standard requirements for imaging examinations must be maintained, including the need for informed consent and adequate explanation of the benefits and risks of radiation. Teleoperations represents an alternative practice model that may offer some patients better access to imaging and alternative working models for Radiographers/Radiological Technologists. Such developments can help expand opportunities for staff recruitment and retention, education and training, continuing professional development and lifelong learning. If examinations are carried out remotely, this provides further opportunities for Radiographers/Radiological Technologists in the field to expand their role and expertise by supporting such operations.

We believe that there are a number of important discussions that are urgently needed to define the role of the radiographer in the delivery of such services. These discussions need to involve the relevant professional bodies, regulators, service providers, vendors and patient representatives. We also believe that there needs to be greater transparency around potential safety issues (e.g. dealing with claustrophobia, protocol errors, screening incidents, need for additional risk assessments), patient experience and outcomes when using such technologies. Such approaches could take the form of published standards of care/best practice guidelines. Safe and effective teleoperations that fit within the EFRS and ISRRT agenda whilst ensuring appropriate recognition and promotion of our profession is paramount. Considering the potential advantages and disadvantages of teleoperations, both for patients and for our profession, both the EFRS and the ISRRT must remain the key players in all relevant discussions, with the involvement of providers/service providers/regulators. We call on national authorities to review their regulatory framework to ensure that these new working models are compatible with safe clinical practice and to engage in stakeholder discussions. Clear responsibilities for those involved in teleoperations are of paramount importance and need to be well defined.

**The EFRS and the ISRRT remain committed to having a strong voice for their members in this area.**

**EFRS Executive Board**

**ISRRT Board of Management**