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EFRS Position on MRI Procedures performed by non-radiographers/non-qualified personnel

The European Federation of Radiographer Societies (EFRS) aims to express a strong support for **radiographers being the primary professionals performing Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) procedures.**

The European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) classification system categorizes **radiographers as integral healthcare professionals** whose expertise is essential in the medical imaging, nuclear medicine, and radiotherapy fields, recognising radiographers as **critical contributors to diagnostic and therapeutic processes, improving patient outcomes and healthcare efficiency.**

Radiographers' clinical skills in MRI, and not only, extend beyond operating machinery. They are trained in general patient care, MRI safety, quality control, patient preparation, and the fundamental physics and instrumentation of MRI technology. This extensive training allows them to handle complex clinical scenarios effectively, ensuring that the MRI process is safe for patients and yields high-quality diagnostic images.

The training programs for radiographers emphasize both theoretical knowledge and practical experience. **Radiographers undergo rigorous education, often including undergraduate and postgraduate** courses that cover MRI-specific knowledge and skills. This comprehensive training ensures that they are well-prepared to perform MRI procedures safely and effectively, contributing to better patient outcomes and higher standards of care.

Radiographers' education includes not only technical skills but also critical patient care competencies. For instance, **radiographers are responsible for guiding patients through the MRI process**, ensuring they are well-informed and comfortable, which is **essential for obtaining accurate imaging results.**

Radiographers' ability to produce precise and correct images, assess preliminary images, and



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manage medico-technical equipment underscores their crucial role in the diagnostic process.

In the recent past the **EFRS and the European Society of Radiology (ESR) have jointly emphasized the importance of patient safety in their comprehensive statement.** They assert that the complex nature of MRI technology and the potential risks involved necessitate the expertise of properly trained radiographers. Radiographers possess specialized knowledge in MRI physics, safety protocols, and patient care, which non-qualified professionals can't accomplish.

Allowing unqualified individuals to perform MRI procedures not only compromises the quality of the diagnostic images but also poses significant risks to patient safety.

MRI safety is paramount due to the unique hazards associated with the procedure. These include strong magnetic fields that can attract ferromagnetic objects, causing potential injuries, and the risk of heating and burns from radiofrequency energy. Moreover, the presence of implants and devices in patients requires meticulous screening and knowledge to avoid life-threatening complications. Radiographers are rigorously trained to identify and mitigate these risks, ensuring that MRI procedures are conducted safely and effectively.

Furthermore, the EFRS has developed the MRI Safety Officer (MRSO) Role Descriptor, which outlines the **critical role of radiographers in managing MRI safety.** The document highlights the necessity of having a dedicated professional responsible for the safe operation of MRI equipment, ensuring adherence to safety protocols, and managing any potential hazards. Radiographers, with their in-depth training and understanding of MRI technology, are uniquely qualified to fulfil this role, thereby minimizing risks associated with MRI procedures.

In addition to the MRSO Role Descriptor, the **consensus of EFRS, ESR, European Federation of Organisations in Medical Physics (EFOMP), European Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine and Biology (ESMRMB), International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine (ISMRM) and Section for Magnetic Resonance Technologists (SMRT), for recommended responsibilities for the management of MR safety underscores the importance of specialized training and competency in MRI safety management.** This consensus advocates for radiographers to lead the efforts in maintaining safety

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standards, given their comprehensive education and hands-on experience with MRI technology. Their expertise ensures that MRI procedures are conducted safely and effectively, safeguarding patients from potential harm.

In conclusion, **it is critical that radiographers, who are specifically trained and certified in MRI procedures, be the ones performing these complex and sensitive tasks.** Their specialized skills and knowledge are essential for ensuring patient safety, producing high-quality diagnostic images, and maintaining the integrity of MRI practices.

It is **imperative that MRI procedures are conducted by highly qualified and specialized radiographers** to ensure patient safety, optimize imaging quality, and maintain the highest standards of medical care.

EFRS strongly urges that policies and practices reflect this necessity, preventing non-qualified professionals from undertaking MRI procedures and EFRS is confident that prioritizing the role of radiographers in MRI procedures will significantly enhance patient safety and the overall quality of healthcare services.

The EFRS Executive Board

21st May 2024

References:

- ESR-EFRS Joint Statement on Patient Safety
- EFRS MRI Safety Officer (MRSO) Role Descriptor
- Consensus for Recommended Responsibilities for Management of MR Safety