

Annual Meeting Essay Awards 2018 for Medical Students & Foundation Doctors
How would you promote Interventional Radiology as a specialty in the modern era?

Promotion of Interventional Radiology (IR) needs a triple-orientated approach involving the general public, the government and commissioners, and its workforce. The role of Interventional Radiologists in providing complex medical procedures is well established and growing. Alarming, governmental priorities do not appear to align with ours and our patients' needs.

We must build upon the BSIR's promotion of public campaigns and develop stronger links with other influential medical associations who can further champion our cause. Our aim must be to increase recognition of our specialty's vital importance to the populations we serve. We must ensure that we are in a position to recruit and retain the workforce IR needs so that it can cope with the soaring demands of the modern era. The BSIR and its members must continue lobbying the government for the resources that will be required if we are to achieve acute centre 24/7 IR services within our working lifetimes.

The link between exposure of medical students and junior doctors to role models and their choices for higher training¹ is an under-appreciated portal of recruitment, and other specialties are increasingly taking advantage of this fact. In an under-recruited specialty with comparatively little (if any) exposure to juniors, our moments to inspire are hugely limited. The BSIR can develop an 'Inspire a Junior' mentorship campaign, further utilising the massive reach of social media, as well as increasing undergraduate curricular exposure to IR².

The NHS is about to be made up of a greater proportion of female doctors than male doctors for the first time³. Levels of female consultants in IR has been stagnant at ~10%⁴. We must dispel the myths such as increased radiation exposure acting as obstacles to a career in IR, and facilitate and champion flexible training and working for both sexes. It is essential that IR is promoted as a specialty that both welcomes and is highly suited for women and men, seen to be highly compatible with family life and providing workdays that finish at predictable times.

The BSIR Essay Prize is a core example of where IR is being promoted to arguably one of its most critical groups; its future workforce. IR currently needs to recruit trainees for an additional year, many of whom may have decided upon a career in Diagnostic Radiology long before. We must therefore do more to promote IR to Radiology Trainees and future applicants. This can be achieved by increasing our presence at other radiology conferences, especially those run for trainees, such as the Society of Radiologists in Training Conferences, an ideal platform to increase the pool of trainees who can be excited by the idea of further specialisation in IR. I would promote the specialty by using modern technologies, such as IR virtual reality simulator stands, and foresee the effects of this on conference delegates to be exciting, stimulating and fascinating. These are the kinds of novel opportunities we need to be providing to our trainees, this is how we should promote Interventional Radiology.

References:

¹ Ray, S. Role Models. *BMJ* 2010;340:c1572

² Lee AM, Lee MJ. Teaching IR to medical students: a call to action. *CVIR*. 2018;41:203–5

³ Royal College of Physicians. Women and medicine. The future: summary of findings from Royal College of Physicians research. https://www.rcr.ac.uk/sites/default/files/RCP_Women_%20in_%20Medicine_%20Report.pdf. Accessed 15 August 2018.

⁴ <https://www.bsir.org/affiliate-groups/women-in-ir/>