

How would you promote Interventional Radiology as a specialty in the modern era?

Interventional Radiology (IR) uses imaging to diagnose and treat a wide range of clinical conditions and include emergency procedures like nephrostomy and uterine artery embolization [1]. The total number of IR procedures in the United Kingdom has expanded by over 50% since 2007. In contrast, there are insufficient IR consultants to meet the demand for providing a 24 hours acute IR service [2]. Promoting IR is imperative to recruit the expertise required for maintaining a 7 days service as well as to improve interest and knowledge of IR for both medical professionals and patients.

In the modern era, websites and social media are great platforms to promote IR. In 2018, the national statistic found 90% of UK adults to have accessed the internet recently [3]. The leading IR society, British Society of Interventional Radiology (BSIR), promotes IR by providing valuable information on IR procedures, training and also patient information leaflets [4]. IR websites should also be easy to navigate, include pictures and video clips to provide visual explanation and have good weblinks to other useful IR websites. Apart from the website of BSIR, Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiological Society of Europe (CIRSE)'s website includes a broad catalogue of lectures and posters pertaining to IR conference and research [5].

Besides, social media platforms can supplement information on IR organisations' websites and help to disseminate the latest IR news and courses to a huge audience. Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter have approximately 42 million active UK users in 2018 [6]. Interestingly, the use of Twitter was found by Kelly *et al.* to increase the impact factor of radiology journals. Radiology journals with Twitter accounts had significant higher impact factor that journals that did not have any Twitter account. The study also showed that higher number of twitter followers was correlated with a greater impact factor [7].

To educate and cultivate interest in IR among medical students and foundation doctors, IR could be incorporated into the curriculum of the medical undergraduate and junior doctor training programme. BSIR provides undergraduate curriculum teaching cases and suggests components for an undergraduate IR curriculum [8]. This would increase the knowledge of IR techniques used for medical management including patient preparation, anatomy involved and also likely complications. Another educational activity to promote IR is an open day at IR facility [9]. This allows opportunity for medical staff and patients to visit the IR facility and learn about IR procedures. Other events like IR courses and career day allow participants to carry out angiography using state-of-the-art simulators and also promote IR as an exciting career choice [10, 11].

Promoting IR as a speciality will increase the awareness and interest in this great speciality. This can be done via websites and social media as well as through incorporation of IR into undergraduate curriculum and other education-related activities. Promoting IR through these channels may encourage medical professionals to apply for IR training and help to achieve adequate workforce for the delivery of a 7 days acute IR service.

References

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