

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

The promotion of interventional radiology (IR) in the modern era poses a challenging yet exciting task. With only 43% of doctors entering speciality training at the end of foundation training, recruitment is proving more difficult than ever.⁽¹⁾ This endeavour should start at an early stage as there is currently limited exposure to IR in undergraduate medical curricula.⁽²⁾ Engagement at the undergraduate level has been suggested provide inspiration and motivation to develop portfolios and clinical experiences in IR.⁽³⁾

The British Society of Interventional Radiology (BSIR) has the potential to provide opportunities and support for undergraduate students with an interest in IR. Public engagement is an effective method of engaging medical students within educational activities. Public engagement has been successful in engaging students in the field of pathology and has formed the basis to innovate the delivery of undergraduate education.⁽⁴⁾ The BSIR has been working to promote women in IR following a recent publication outlining the gender gap in the speciality.⁽⁵⁾ Engaging medical students through public engagement activities may provide an avenue to provide insights regarding radiation exposure and work life balance to inspire confidence in the speciality. The following national network has been proposed to achieve this objective in IR.

National IR Public Engagement Network

This network will allow students to get involved in activities such as developing educational resources/videos in IR topics and engaging with the public to apply their knowledge. The aim is to improve public awareness of the common procedures in IR whilst empowering medical students to integrate with the community to provide public health education.

Targeting student attendees at large IR conferences to join this scheme would attract the appropriate audience. This can be achieved by delivering a short presentation summarising the network. Contacting the undergraduate education office at UK medical schools to send emails to entire student cohorts can supplement the recruitment drive.

Social media accounts in Twitter, Instagram and Facebook can be utilised to appropriately engage with students on a regular basis. It can also be the platform to showcase public

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engagement activities across the UK. The use of technology and social media will be invaluable in reaching a wider international audience.

Once recruited the students can form teams to conduct public engagement activities. Regional IR trainees and consultants can be recruited supervise students. The organisational structure and examples of public engagement topics relevant to IR have been illustrated in **Figure 1**.

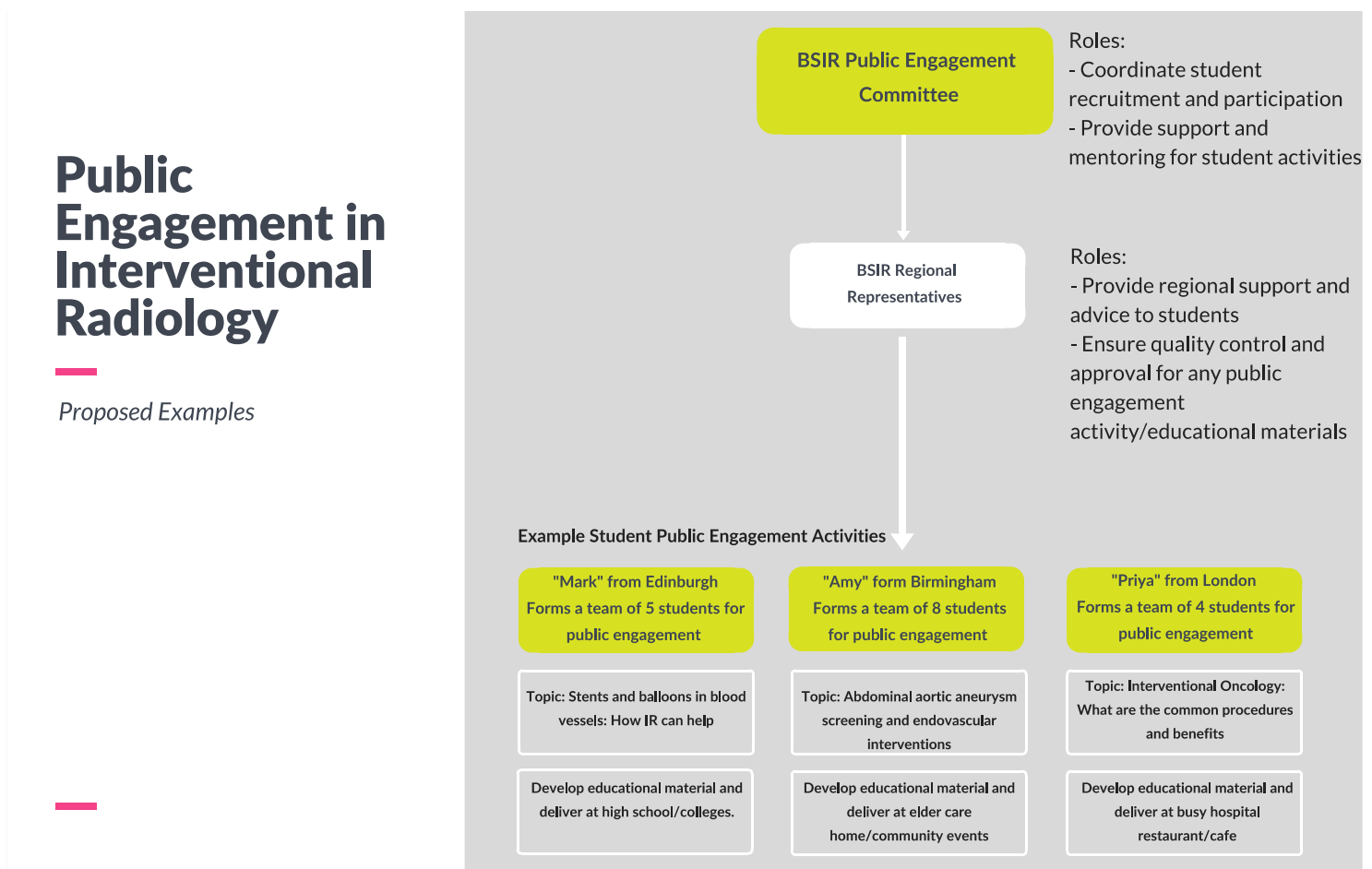


Figure 1: Organisational structure and example student public engagement activities of the proposed network. Target audiences range from school students, specific patient populations and the general public.

This network will require affiliation with BSIR to successfully implement. Undergraduate students actively seek opportunities to build their portfolios by participating in national opportunities. Student led public engagement activities can be highlighted and presented at the annual BSIR conference, where outstanding efforts can be recognised with prizes. Attendance at the conference can also inform students of the excellent training and career

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opportunities within IR. Targeting students early in training by empowering them to conduct public engagement activities is an innovative way of promoting IR in the modern era.

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