

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

Interventional Radiology (IR) is often considered to be the future of modern medicine. Using imaged guided techniques, the specialty accurately diagnoses and treats conditions that were once deemed untreatable. However, although Radiology is generally a popular specialty, IR has not been promoted as much as it deserves. This stems from the limited exposure at the medical school level. In order to promote the specialty, we need to motivate the next generation of medical students and junior doctors. There are several ways this can be made possible.

Mentorship Programmes

Mentors have shown to play a key role in sculpting successful careers for students and professionals at any level. Having an IR professional share their knowledge with medical students and junior doctors can help form the foundations of a robust career path. Studies have shown mentors play a key role in motivating an individual and providing vital support and advice.(1,2)

Open IR societies at university

University societies that are academic have proven to be vital when it comes to showing interest in certain specialties. Not only do they help students build their CV but also allows the student to gain a glimpse into the specialty by organising talks and taster sessions.

Teach IR techniques to medical students

The current medical school curriculum covers certain core competencies a student must obtain before embarking their career as a doctor. Introducing and teaching optional modules involving IR techniques will allow medical students to understand what a career in IR involves.

Increase IR exposure at medical school

There is limited exposure to IR at medical school. Most universities have placements in clinical radiology, but these places are not long enough to allow the student to envisage what the specialty truly involves. An IR placement can be incorporated into the curriculum during a surgical placement, allowing a student to understand the specialty and necessary skills required.

Visualise a career in IR

All the above helps a student understand and visualise a career in IR. To promote IR, it must start at the very roots of medical school.

Adapt the training programme

In addition to students, the theme of limited IR exposure continues into the foundation year curriculum across the country. The programme can be adapted to involve a few weeks placement in IR which will allow junior doctors to know what it is like to work in the specialty.

Teach IR techniques to junior doctors

This is a similar concept to teaching medical students. Not only does it promote IR, but it allows junior doctors to build their CV and interest in IR.

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The above creates The **MOTIVATE** Framework:

- M**entorship Programmes
- O**pen IR societies at university
- T**each IR techniques to medical students
- I**ncrease IR exposure at medical school
- V**isualise a career in IR
- A**dapt the training programme
- T**Each IR techniques to junior doctors

IR has a bright future, and by following the above framework we can motivate and encourage future doctors to enter this up and coming specialty in modern medicine.

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Words 494 (excluding title)

References

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- (2) Schrubbe KF. Mentorship: a critical component for professional growth and academic success. *J Dent Educ*. 2004; 68 (3): 324. Available from: <http://www.identaled.org/content/68/3/324.abstract> .