

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

Having previously sat on the BSIRT committee as a medical student representative enabled me to contribute toward promoting IR; an ongoing issue which is slowly being addressed.

Interventional Radiology as a minimally invasive image-guided surgical specialty is an invaluable resource within the health service. It is imperative students and doctors have an appreciation for IR if not at least knowledge of the specialty. Below is my 10-point-plan to promote IR.

1) Increased Awareness

Consider innovative approaches to raise awareness of the specialty through different modalities, to inform students and doctors about the profession, the procedures available and benefits of each over conventional open surgical approaches, the training pathway, what to start doing early on, the future of IR and how IR will interact harmoniously with other specialties offering the same procedures. To also work closely with media experts to aid national IR promotion.

2) Undergraduate Curriculum

Increase emphasis and integration of Radiology within the undergraduate curriculum, particularly linked to lab work/anatomical teaching, with a nationally recognised and agreed curriculum made aware to students.

3) Formal vs Informal Teaching¹

Vary teaching between peer/near-peer and accredited faculty educators to maximise engagement and student interest.

4) National Network for Radiologists

To identify and connect Radiologists keen to be involved in undergraduate/foundation teaching and increase student/junior doctor exposure to the department.

5) Radiology Societies

After setting up Southampton University Radiology Society it became apparent many medical schools do not yet have Radiology Societies. Medical schools could be given more incentive to create a Radiology society and this could facilitate a national platform that connects radiology societies across UK.

6) Mentorship Schemes

This has the potential to be successful if realistic and clear goals outlined and if Radiology departments are logistically able and have an incentive to host students.

7) Conferences

More undergraduate/foundation doctor - aimed conference involving competitions and research/audit presenting opportunities to encourage and attract more interest in the specialty.

8) Platforms for Teaching

Increased awareness of online, interactive platforms like 'Radiopedia', 'Radiology Café', 'Figure 1'. To maximise the potential of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter (with caution) to teach, attract, bring together and enthuse like-minded students and doctors.

9) Outreach Programmes

Feedback was exceptionally positive for the BSIRT visit to Southampton last year which confirmed the need for more to be done, in the knowledge that any outreach efforts will be embraced. To approach medical schools and foundation training programmes to advertise the components listed above. Perhaps create an 'outreach representative' role of one assigned student/doctor in each deanery to help facilitate liaising with medical schools and foundation training programmes across the UK to coordinate and advertise organised events.

10) Women in IR²

More emphasis on women in IR and evidence how a work-life balance can be met through research exploring why there is such a low female to male consultant ratio. To organise and host a women in IR conference with prominent female figures in IR.

Word count: 487

References:

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2. Wah TM. The Interventional Radiology (IR) Gender Gap: A Prospective Online Survey by the Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiological Society of Europe (CIRSE). *CardioVascular and Interventional Radiology* 2018;41(8): 1241–1253