

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

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Interventional radiology (IR) has emerged within the modern medical era to become central in delivering patient centred care. However promotion and awareness of IR may be lacking, often drawing blank faces amongst healthcare professionals i.e. doctors, nurses and other allied health workers.

Promotion of IR should aim to target specific groups of people. Medical undergraduates represent a crucial demographic where IR should be promoted, as many students decide on a clinical specialty by the end of medical school. Undergraduate curriculums therefore need to increase emphasis with lectures from IR consultants and also provide clinical attachments within the department. Forming an undergraduate IR society or electing representatives within the medical school and supporting them with speaker events will help inspire students. National societies should be encouraged to provide various student prizes for those interested and ought to communicate these more directly. For example opportunities to attend IR conferences or simulation days would be an excellent way to promote the specialty.

Postgraduate trainees within respective specialities may have limited contact with IR. Hospitals often have 'grand round' education lectures which would provide the perfect platform to start conversations regarding IR and encourage a culture of learning. When suitable audit or research opportunities arise, radiologists could ask for junior doctors from any specialty to be involved. Nursing staff in IR should also look for opportunities to promote IR within the hospital community.

Social media, particularly Twitter, has been highlighted in an article *Journal of the American College of Radiology* to be a powerful tool when used strategically.¹ It describes how Twitter is an excellent platform for direct interaction with patients, patient advocacy groups, other physicians, and trainees. Examples may include patients wishing to self-refer, demonstration of innovative procedures and employment/research opportunities.

Marketing IR would require collaboration with hospital public relations to spread the word. An increased presence in the local media would be beneficial not only to the department, but to the image of the hospital as a whole within the local community. Better links with referring primary or secondary care doctors may help increase demand and therefore funding for expanded IR services.

In summary, medical students and prospective trainees interested in IR should feel supported which will help recruitment for the future. This urgency is further heightened by current shortages of IR consultants in parts of the UK.² Social media has great potential to connect and encourage conversation regarding IR. Effective marketing to the local community could then encourage a greater demand for services. With increasing capability of IR, there needs to be greater promotion within our healthcare community.

References

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