

Outline ideas to promote IR in medical school / at workplace

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Ever since Seldinger's publication¹ which revolutionized clinical practice with the building blocks of interventional radiology (IR), there is no denying that this innovative field of medicine has changed the lives of many patients and their families. In contrast to conventional surgery, its minimally invasive nature and reduced mortality rate² has led to an increase in demand for IR procedures, which has in turn flagged the need for more medical professionals to pursue this field³.

An indisputable factor influencing the specialty medical students and trainees go onto pursue, is early exposure during their training⁴. Within the UK, 83% of medical students claimed there was inadequate or very inadequate training relating to radiology⁵. Therefore, with such limited exposure and knowledge of what exactly IR entails, it may not be at all surprising that medical students hesitate to pursue this as a life-long career.

Although modifications in the current academic curriculum is an essential step in introducing IR to students, implementing changes across thirty-three medical schools may be a long-term goal to work towards. A provisory solution to this would be the adaptation of a dual track approach - delivering e-lectures for students and trainees directly through the British Society of Interventional Radiology (BSIR) website. In fact, evidence show that provision of educational courses relating to IR contribute to a 13% increase in interest amongst medical students to consider this specialty as a future career choice^{6,7}. Furthermore, in the thriving era of social media, utilisation of these platforms can have a significant impact on the medical community. For example, uploading informative video contents portraying a day in the life of an interventional radiologist, or sharing patient experiences of IR could be beneficial for both prospective medical graduates as well as patients, acting as an effective medium in delivering the intentions of the BSIR.

In recent years, students and trainees are beginning to actively explore the medical field beyond their curriculum. Departmental clubs and societies act as a gateway to the wider medical community, providing a platform for debate and knowledge supplementation for students. In light of this, the establishment of a student ambassador scheme in multiple institutions may be an effective option to promote the works of the BSIR to a greater pool of audience. Additionally, medical specialty workshops are becoming increasingly popular, and the problem-based nature of IR encompasses great potential to host 'medical hackathon' events. Workshops as such will provide opportunities for students and trainees to actively conduct further research within a short period of time, sparking their interest in IR, as well as enrooting a multidisciplinary approach in the early stages of their training.

To promote IR, a diverse approach seems imperative. Seeking for and investing in new opportunities to encourage medical students and trainees into the field of IR will contribute greatly to the innovative movement of medicine, and will undoubtedly mark a new paradigm in healthcare provision for patients in the near future.

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