
How is the British Institute of Radiology Meeting the Challenges of Today's Healthcare Environment



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The most significant challenge facing any membership organisation is how to stay relevant in today's healthcare world of free information and high clinical workloads and pressures. This is exacerbated by increasing specialisation and the need to stay abreast of developments in a fast-changing medical world. Examples of the increased complexity of imaging and radiation oncology are personalised imaging, image-guided radiotherapy and 'artificial intelligence'.

At the [British Institute of Radiology](#), most of our members are either radiologists or radiographers with a small, but active, scientific membership [like me, as my background is in medical physics]. We are in fact open to anyone interested in imaging, radiation oncology or the underlying sciences. We provide education and guidance to our members and try our best to influence policy makers! We also publish the journals [BJR](#) and [BJR Case Reports](#) as well as other publications.

In response to current challenges we have increased our [programme of online education, live and recorded webinars](#). We have also been instrumental in developing, for cardiologists in the UK, the [online training modules for their radiation protection in interventional cardiology](#). However, specific challenges often demand specific responses, so the BIR has recently issued guidance regarding innovative approaches to the radiologist workforce crisis, [highlighting the use of radiographer reporting where proven effective to do so](#). Although this support may conflict with current Royal College of Radiologists statements, our call was supported by many radiologists. Clearly this issue is controversial and we hope more evidence will provide service leaders and policy makers with a more robust evidence base with which to move forward in this area. However, what is not in dispute is that in the UK radiographers are providing a high-quality reporting service that underpins waiting time management, and our position is very much supporting innovation. The development of radiology networks in the UK may also impinge in this area, but already I see within one part of the UK a move to home reporting by radiographers!

Another area that has massively expanded over my time in healthcare is the area of quantification. This clearly was driven by the move away from film-screen radiography; however, there were digital images and quantification before CR/DR, especially in CT, MRI and US. It always struck me how little evidence one can get when buying, for instance, a software package to measure cerebral blood flow in the brain—how does the radiologist know whether or not the numbers and maps are correct and do they understand the error bars on those numbers? Now we have, routinely, subtraction imaging and tissue characterisation, and are rapidly moving into a world where precision radiology is emerging. There is definitely an unmet need in imaging professional education in informatics and quantification and I hope that BIR may play a role in this. We have set up a [Clinical Intelligence Special Interest Group](#) and they are already making links with the British Computer Society and organising exciting events. This field is ripe for more scientist involvement at the clinical level and is definitely not a threat to the radiologist despite all the scare stories from US-based tech company bosses!

Clearly, therefore, there are many, disparate challenges facing our fields. The best way to meet these is through collaboration, education and scientific advancement leading to a better evidence base. I genuinely believe that the BIR will play a part in this evolving world, educating and influencing and encouraging the separate professions to think holistically with a shared vision—that of improving diagnostic and therapeutic efficiency for the benefit of the patient. I am proud to be the current President but my part is transient, and I look forward to the younger generations coming through as leaders, teaching us old 'uns how to do it!

What is your top management tip?

Management is different from leadership!

Leadership - have a vision that is shared with your team and lead from the front.

What would you single out as a career highlight?

I have to say being President of the British Institute of Radiology—I have met so many talented people that have inspired me over the last year.

If you had not chosen this career path you would have become a...?

Definitely an airline pilot - if fact that was my first choice before eyesight sent me spinning towards a medical scientific career.

What are your personal interests outside of work?

Flying - currently gaining my private pilot's licence.

Your favourite quote?

Thomas Watson, IBM President 1943 - 'I think there is a world market for maybe 5 computers' - Never try to predict what might happen !

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