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Reforming Education in Radiology - Role of the Swedish Society of Medical Radiology

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The Swedish Society of Medical Radiology

The Swedish Society of Medical Radiology (SFMR) was founded in 1919 by Gösta Forsell, who became the first Professor of radiology in the world. He thereafter started 'Acta Radiologica' in 1921. Today, the society has 1150 members, a big increase on the original 49 members that joined when the society was founded in 1921.

The SFMR is a section of both the Swedish Medical Association and the Swedish Society of Medicine. A new governing board is elected every second year. The Annual General Assembly is held during the society's annual conference, the "Röntgenveckan". Annual conferences have been held during almost the entire existence of the SFMR. During the last decade, the annual conference changed and is now a joint meeting for different categories working in radiology. Last year, there were 1600 attendees at the meeting. Its goals are to: institute critically reviews and certifies education of relevance to this target group, according to a defined standard. Educational courses approved by the institute are

- Promote the development of radiology by arranging scientific conferences and discussions and to distribute research results in the field;
- Promote education in radiology;
- Collaborate internationally for scientific and educational issues;
- Develop diagnostic and therapeutic radiology in medicine; and
- Cover professional issues in radiology for members in the society.

Two of its committees bear especial mention. The first, the quality committee, aims to work for increasing quality and knowledge about quality in radiology. The second, the education committee, is developing a new training charter and core curriculum for the new specialty, which I will explain further in the article.

Education of Radiologists in Sweden

In Sweden, physicians are trained at the six medical schools of the Universities of Lund, Gothenburg, Linköping, Stockholm (Karolinska Institutet), Uppsala and Umeå. Medical education is entirely financed by the state and is linked to the university hospitals and other parts of the health services, such as primary healthcare. The number of medical students is limited and every year some 900 students begin medical training. To become a registered physician a student must successfully complete a programme of study of five and a half years, followed by a 21-month training period in general medical care, and a written examination. On registration a physician is authorised to practice, but almost all physicians choose to continue their studies in order to qualify as a specialist. This requires five years of service in one of the 60 recognised specialist fields.

To become a consultant or head of department, a physician needs five years of postgraduate specialist training.

On average, a radiologic trainee spends 40 hours a week in classes and is obliged to perform on call duty after one to two years. During training, the responsibility increases according to the personal development. During the entire residency, a personal tutor is assigned to the resident.

The SFMR is involved in the planning of the new curriculum and training charter. The main institute involved is IPULS, for the professional development of physicians in Sweden. IPULS' principal task is to support the continuing professional development and postgraduate education of physicians in Sweden. The institute critically reviews and certifies education of relevance to this target group, according to a defined standard. Educational course approved by the institute are critically reviewed and certifies education of relevance to this target group, according to a defined standard. brought together and published in a "physicians' online educational catalogue", which is readily accessible and searchable on the institute's website (www.ipuls.se). On this site, most of the courses are collected and certified. The radiologists are responsible for their own CME but the employer usually covers the cost.

Assessing Performance

Performance is assessed in residents and fellows through continuous supervision by a personal tutor. However, after graduation, their qualification is not officially assessed at an examination but there is a possibility to voluntarily participate in one. Some leadership education is provided during medical school and also an introduction course in hospital management arranged by the SFMR.

Reforming Education in Radiology

As part of its mission to continuously improve the standard of training of radiologists, and therefore the provision of healthcare in Sweden, the SFMR is heavily involved in the revision of the old medical curriculum. As part of these reforms, the old specialties, namely medical radiology, neuroradiology, nuclear medicine and clinical physiology, will be joined under one new speciality named "image and functional medicine" (bild och funktionsmedicin).

The new reform will increase the amount of theoretical training and science provided during residency. Furthermore, the assessment of competence for fulfilling specialist education will be done not only at the hospital but also at a national level. Finally, it has been possible to obtain credit from residency to research studies and vice versa. The reform will not effect the current process in a formal way. The workload during residency will be altered with more physiology and nuclear medicine but also with more theoretical and scientific input.

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