
Technology Opens Up Fresh Avenues for Communication with Radiologists



Faster than ever patients can now access their radiology reports via online portals. In response, radiologists are evolving their communication approaches. It is essential that the language used in these reports is simplified so that they are more understandable to the wide range of people reading the reports.

Moreover, as radiologists increasingly engage with patients through online portals, it's crucial to provide training that equips them with the skills to interact with patients and their families, demonstrating empathy and honesty.

Dr. Becker, a professor emeritus and former chair of the Department of Radiology and Medical Information Sciences at University Hospitals of Geneva, suggested that it could be valuable to offer solutions that aid patients in comprehending their diagnostic imaging results. This could involve the automatic translation of original reports into consumer-friendly health language using AI-driven natural language processing tools. Additionally, providing hyperlinks to relevant multimedia platforms that explain technical terms may be beneficial.

While previous reports were tailored for fellow physicians, the goal is to now provide information that is easily understandable for non-physicians, without medical jargon. Such reports will evolve as more feedback is gathered and through trial and error.

Christoph D. Becker, MD, EBIR, said “ Patients are going to continue being more involved in decision-making regarding their health care and patient portals, where imaging reports are posted, are part of that process”.

Unfortunately, one of the largest challenges faced by radiologists is the availability of time to have direct conversations with patients. Another concern is when patients ask about treatment options. It is important to clarify that the most suitable healthcare team member is responsible for addressing treatment options.

Patients often assume that the physician who ordered the examination is the same person interpreting it and making the diagnosis. Direct communication allows the opportunity to rectify this misconception and offers the chance to provide more comprehensive and precise information compared to other healthcare providers. Additionally, direct communication with patients humanises radiologists and adds a personal touch to their role.

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