
#UKRC2015: Keep Calm and See the Duty Radiologist



A rota of duty radiologists to handle queries is a highly efficient triage system that offers a beneficial service to clinicians and saves radiologists' time by protecting their work environment, according to a study presented at UKRC 2015 by Dr. Laura Nash, University Hospital of South Manchester.

At the University Hospital the duty radiologist system has one radiologist as the contact for clinicians. All consultants and senior trainees are on the rota for sessions of 1-2 hours.

Nash looked at the type of interactions and audited 4 hours of radiology a day, morning and evening, over a 1 week period. During that period there were 300 interactions, with an average of just over 10 interactions per hour. 46% of requests were by phone, 54% in person.

88% of the interactions were handled solely by the duty radiologist. Only 12% of cases involved another radiologist. In addition 97% of appropriate interactions were handled successfully at the time of contact. 87% of interactions were deemed appropriate, while the other 13% did not require the skills of a radiologist.

The most common reasons for contacting the duty radiologist were to seek advice about scan options (6%), clarification of a report (2%), advice from a specific radiologist (6%), vetting requests (11%) or a clerical issue (3%). Other reasons included delay in reporting, unrealistic expectations, requests for scans to be reported when reports were already on the system, and to quote one enquirer "It's quicker to come round here and ask than it is to look at the report."

There were 90 scan/intervention requests, 30% of all interactions. Of these 78 were required as soon as possible and took place on the same day. CT was the most popular to be requested. Reasons for scans not being performed included another modality being more appropriate, the scan not being warranted and on hold awaiting improvement of renal function. There were 71 requests for radiographs or scans to be reported.

The advantages of the duty radiology rota are an overall increase in efficiency. Individual radiologists' workflow is disturbed less often, there are fewer interruptions in the main reporting room and overall there is increased efficiency of scanning and reporting.

Responding to audience questions, Nash confirmed that the duty radiologist is only there to handle queries and reports only if there is time. For subspecialty queries, another radiologist is sought out if it is not the subspecialty of the duty radiologist.

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