

Quality Issues in Teleradiology

Teleradiology Chapter 3
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DISCLOSURE

✓ CHAIR, REAL TIME RADIOLOGY INC

QUALITY





CHAPTER 1 IS WRITTEN

The Technical Barriers to Teleradiology and
Digital Imaging are Behind us



NEW AGE... NEW CHALLENGE

- ✓ The Image has left the Department
- ✓ Widespread dissemination of images raises issues of jurisdiction, professional turf, and privacy.
- ✓ Outsourcing of medical imaging is a reality
- ✓ Challenges to local, provincial and national radiologist primacy and control
- ✓ Challenges to turf



The Changing Environment

- ✓ The Public is informed and has higher expectations
- ✓ Government and institutions are becoming more "outcome aware"
- ✓ Failure to provide what is needed is both unprofessional, and bad for business

Lack of Quality is Risky

- ✓ Radiologists increasingly responsible for NOT providing care when needed
- ✓ Accept responsibility for what we do OR>>>
- ✓ Accept responsibility for what we DON'T DO (Berlin)
- ✓ Forfeit our leadership AND Market Share
- ✓ Others are prepared to jump in (Cardiologists, Indian Rads)



The Quality Challenge

- ✓ Patient Care needs will dominate
- ✓ Imaging more essential than before in patient care.
- ✓ Availability of timely and accurate reports 24/7 now possible and will be expected
- ✓ Squeeze occurs between quantity/ timely availability/quality/rad burnout. (Lau)



The Reality

- ✓ Teleradiology will allow outsourcing
- ✓ This trend will be initially quality/outcome driven.
- ✓ When it becomes price driven....**COMMODITIZATION**
- ✓ This fear could cause us to forfeit quality



Better.... And Worse

- ✓ The new technologies bring efficiencies
- ✓ Eyes, minds and voices travel to patients at c
- ✓ BUT:
- ✓ Studies more complex
- ✓ Studies more numerous
- ✓ Patients and clinicians more demanding
- ✓ Availability of technology negates excuses



Our Comfort Zone is Gone

- ✓ Lack of radiologists is no longer a reason for suboptimal care
- ✓ Fatigue or the lateness of the hour no longer a reason for sympathy

QUALITY

- ✓ THE HILL TO DIE ON
- ✓ PURSUIT MUST BE SYSTEMATIC, ORGANIZED, INTERNATIONAL IN SCOPE
- ✓ WITHOUT SYSTEMATIC QUALITY PROGRAMS, MEDIOCRITY AND CHAOS WILL RULE (not radiologists!)





Lessons from the Airline Industry

- ✓ Accidents not tolerated
- ✓ Since 1995, pursuit of quality proactive, not simply reactive
- ✓ Accident a result of breakdown of many systems simultaneously



Quality in Imaging

- ✓ Timely, efficient and appropriate access to competent radiology consultation and reporting whenever needed
- ✓ Whatever system of care will deliver this best will be the winner in the future.



IRQN 9 PRINCIPLES

1. Primacy of the Patient
2. Uniform standard of quality across the enterprise
3. Uncompromised image quality
4. Radiologist qualification and professionalism
5. Advanced/improved communication
6. Documentation and storage
7. Security
8. Ethics
9. Active Quality Assurance

The “Being There” Myth

- ✓ Virtual practice can replicate many of the needed components of quality
- ✓ NEVER replaces physical presence
- ✓ MUCH PREFERRED to absence, fatigue or not being there at all
- ✓ Virtual Presence IS “Being There”
- ✓ Consultation, technologist supervision, and rapid reporting will often exceed on site services



We Like Teleradiology Better

- ✓ ER MDs often prefer Telerad services to that provided by physical presence of a radiologist



Quality In Teleradiology

- ✓ Larger scale than individuals or sites (provincial , national or international virtual departments)
- ✓ Collaboration of many minds
- ✓ More transparent to national or international scrutiny
- ✓ Improvements can be instantaneous and enterprise wide.
- ✓ More accountable and responsive to government and public requirements
- ✓ Enhanced focus on technical innovation to quality
- ✓ Dynamic feedback on systems solutions and failures
- ✓ Improved workflow

Quality Value Adds of Telehealth

- ✓ Enhanced Access (timely anytime reporting)
- ✓ Integration of processes and procedures across sites
- ✓ Enhanced safety through more direct radiologist supervision (consultant always available) and uniform protocols and system design
- ✓ Efficiencies due to economies of scale.



Additional Quality Benefits

- ✓ Access to SubSpecialists
- ✓ Blocking of lower quality telerad services
- ✓ Protection of Radiologist directed and performed services



Quality ... The Downside

- ✓ Its pursuit eliminates excuses, and begins to clearly separate the practices of the past from those of the future
- ✓ The quality train will leave the station if we don't jump on board
- ✓ No choice but to accept the new technologies, demands and needs, and continue to differentiate ourselves on the basis of quality





Evolve or Perish

- ✓ Pursuit of quality has two purposes:
- ✓ It is our professional obligation
- ✓ It is essential to our survival as a profession

