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Do current teaching methods of radiology in medical school adequately prepare students for working as a doctor? A cross-sectional review

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Purpose: Deriving-maximum-benefit-from radiology rotations in medical schools have historically been considered challenging. Self-directed reliance has resulted in the rotation being considered a “radi-holiday”. While teaching is frequently based on interpretation of imaging, lack of education on appropriate imaging renders students feeling unprepared.

Materials-&-Methods: Medical students at various levels of their medical education were asked to participate in this study. A series of twelve various clinical scenarios representing different specialities were extracted from the American College of Radiology's Appropriateness Criteria and an ad hoc questionnaire was generated. Students were required to identify the imaging modality they considered most appropriate for various clinical scenarios. Participants' also organised lists of radiological requests in order of importance assess prioritisation skills. Participants who had completed a radiology rotation were identified.

Results: Ninety medical students from two university teaching hospitals partook in the cross-sectional study. The results were subdivided into groups based on years of medical education and prior radiological teaching. Overall, the medianscore for identifyingappropriate imaging was 67.6% (16.7 – 96.2) in medical students who had received prior teaching in radiology (Group A) and 63.4 (12.8 – 92.5) for those who had yet to undertake their radiology modular teaching (Group B). Ability to prioritise imaging needs of most importance was identified in 64.1% of Group A and 71.4% of Group. The best performance for both identifying appropriate imaging and prioritisation was identified in the final year medical students, 78.3% all of whom received formal teaching in radiology. Improvement in results was proportional to time spent in medical education.

Conclusion: Capacity-to-identify-correct-imaging-modalities-is-undoubtedly-improved-with-duration-of-medical education. The performance of the final year medical students suggests that improvement with teaching isidentifiable, but undoubtedly still inadequate. Considering the proximity of these students to joining the workforce, further teaching on appropriate imaging requirements and prioritisation could benefit their preparation for life as a doctor.

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