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BY MÉLISANDE ROUGER

Heads of department encourage final year residents to take EDiR

An ever-increasing number of heads of department (HoD) are encouraging their final year residents to take the examination for the European Diploma in Radiology (EDiR). The diploma is a certificate of excellence and a distinctive advantage on a radiologist's CV, in line with European recommendations, according to Prof. Paul M. Parizel, Chair of the Department of Radiology at Antwerp University Hospital, and Prof. Laura Oleaga Zufiría, Head of the Department of Radiology at Hospital Clinic in Barcelona.



If there were a perfect time to take the EDiR exam, it would be during the final year of residency or shortly after board certification, explained Prof. Paul M. Parizel, Chair of the ESR Board of Directors.

Taking the EDiR is a fantastic opportunity for radiologists to test their excellence and compare themselves to their colleagues overseas. "While the national board exam is like the national championship of radiology education, EDiR would be the world championship or the Olympics," Parizel said.

A rite of passage

Any radiologist regardless of his/her experience can sit the examination. But if there were a perfect time to take the exam, it would be during the final year of residency or shortly after board certification, Parizel explained. "At that time in a person's



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life all the information is still fresh. Once you have been practicing for 20 years, you tend to specialise in certain areas and may not have the broad knowledge that is necessary to pass EDiR. It's a rite of passage to do it right after your residency," he said.

EDiR reflects the content of the European Training Curriculum (ETC), which covers every aspect of radiology practice. As such, it is an accurate test of general knowledge of the specialty. "It's a way of making sure that residents did everything they are supposed to and have acquired the full body of knowledge and skills," Parizel said.

This information is important for recruiters when they are faced with candidates from another country. "It's often hard to judge if a foreign candidate has all the necessary skills for the good practice of radiology. In that sense EDiR is a very good reference," he said.

More than an extra line on a CV

Designed to facilitate professional mobility, the diploma is an asset for radiologists both in and outside Europe. At her institution, like many across Spain, Oleaga trains many residents from Latin America; she thinks EDiR can be very useful for these candidates if they decide to leave the country. "It's very important for them to have an internationally recognised certification such as EDiR, it shows you have been trained according to the ETC," she said.

Even for candidates applying for a position within their home country, having the diploma can prove to be a decisive factor. "Diploma holders will have an advantage if they are looking for a job. It's a test of character. It proves that this person wants to compare him or herself to international competition. It shows that this person has that kind of energy, it's more than just an extra line on their CV," Parizel said.

"If we have two candidates with the same scores but one of them

has the diploma, this means that this person has extra motivation. It's definitely a plus. It also shows their interest for international radiology and tells you something about the candidate's personality and how they want to approach their career," Oleaga echoed.

Growing support from institutions

Overall 2,000 candidates have applied to take the EDiR exam since 2011 and 78% have passed, highlighting the solidity of the exam.

An increasing number of institutions are now encouraging their residents to take the diploma. At the University of Antwerp, residents must agree to take the examination at the end of their training as part of their contract. If they pass the exam, the university will reimburse their travel, registration and accommodation fees.

The University of Leuven also offers EDiR as an alternative to their local examination. "The diploma is gaining in popularity among residents and academics in Belgium," Parizel said. Similar initiatives are underway across Europe, notably in Spain. Hospital Clinic in Barcelona started funding registration fees (€500) for the diploma last year. "It's a good incentive for residents to take the exam," Oleaga said.

The European Diploma in Radiology can assist trainees who are

preparing for their national board examination; but it can also help training centres show the value of their training and boost their reputation, Oleaga pointed out. "EDiR works as a reference for trainees to understand the areas of weakness they should reinforce when preparing for their national board exam and it can serve as a reference for training centres, especially in countries without an examination at the end of training," she explained.

In countries where such certification does exist, EDiR could help institutions know they offer appropriate training – and as such could be used as an equivalent to the national training examination, Oleaga believes. "I would very much agree with this initiative, which would serve to facilitate the standardisation of the training centres according to the ETC. Right now we are trying to standardise education in all training centres in line with the ETC. So if our residents pass EDiR, it means they are trained appropriately," she said.

Other institutions should now take the step. "The diploma is becoming more and better known. Many department chairs share my opinion about the advantages it provides, not only to the trainees, but also to the centre itself to have a reference about the training they provide."

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