

Letter to the Editor and Reply

Sharing the thoughts of Radiology in India stands at the crossroads: Friends, foes, and the future

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Dear editor,

After having read the article titled "Radiology in India Stands at the Crossroads: Friends, Foes, and the Future," we have felt compelled to highlight a resemblance of a certain issue that can be seen beyond the Asian region and that we, as authors, feel in Mexico too.

Specialty impingement

It is clear that certain specialties such as those mentioned in the article; obstetrics, neurology, and gastroenterology have infringed upon the limits of radiology with the intent of becoming self-sufficient while ignoring that most diseases are multidisciplinary and therefore may need a systematic approach that could go beyond their specific specialty reach and that only a trained radiologist can provide [1].

To that list we would like to add specialties such as emergency medicine, internal medicine and general surgery, as these specialties have gained much ground on the use of basic ultrasound techniques which can sometimes delay more advanced imaging options and consultation from the imaging department. This ongoing fight for the ultrasound has sometimes been referred to as a "turf-battle" but you can only have a "turf-battle" if both parties wish to be a part of it, therefore, predictions have been made that one day, radiologists may have a reduced role in ultrasound since not all of them enjoy performing ultrasound examinations [2].

In order to further contextualize the sense of being overwhelmed felt due to other specialties breaching the bounds of radiology, we present a table with summaries of other publications that further explore this topic (Table 1).

Table 1. Publications alluding to the use of ultrasonography beyond the imaging department [2, 3].

Authors	Years	Conclusions
Chang SD, Munk PL et al.	2014	"What many radiologists have found is that these bedside examinations by clinicians often result in referral either for detailed formal ultrasound examinations or other imaging studies. We are in no danger of finding ourselves under- let alone unemployed"
Sidhu, Paul S., et al.	2023	"In many countries, ultrasound was initially positioned under the umbrella of radiology, but it is important to bear in mind that initial research and practice was performed in a collaboration between engineers and different medical specialties, not just radiology, and has always been an inter-disciplinary modality. This is one of the reasons that ultrasound remains so attractive to practitioners from many medical specialties"

Conclusion

Specialty interest in radiology will inevitably continue to grow as other specialties increase their independence from the imaging department; however, radiologists will preserve their role as guiding clinical counselors for as long as the other specialties feel the need to refer patients to alleviate any imaging-related doubts. Patient-centered care should always remain our primary goal.

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Reply

We thank the authors for bringing our article to attention and the thoughtfully written letter. Diagnostic radiology is often described as “the eyes of modern medicine” as it provides powerful visual information that leads to early diagnosis and increased agreement among doctors, and even patients. With the widespread use of Picture Archive Communicating System (PACS) and standardized reporting systems, radiology has become or is becoming “the backbone of modern medicine”. Closely linked to and driven by technologies, capitalism and evidence-based medicine, radiology is rapidly expanding and has become highly attractive even to non-radiologists who expect to share this exciting journey. In the expanding world of diagnostic imaging, which continues to offer new areas of interest and welcomes more and more new players, roles beyond “interpretation, diagnosis, or minimally invasive treatment”, which can strengthen the system, and best serve patients should be more actively introduced to the radiologists and radiological residents. These roles include providing expert consultation, serving as trainers, developing curricula, contributing to accreditation, monitoring safety, performing cost-effectiveness analyses, among others.

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