Nordic participation in European Action Week

Inspection of justification in radiology

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Background

• Justification is one of the fundamental principles in RP
• Its necessity is reinforced in the new EU-BSS Directive and its need for enhanced implementation is addressed in the “Bonn Call for Action” and in the council conclusions on justification by the European Commission
• To be carried out at an individual level before exposure
• Strong indications that 20-30% of medical exposures are unjustified/inappropriate in many economically developed countries
Regulatory bodies have an important role in promoting and ensuring that justification is properly implemented at medical imaging facilities.

HERCA position paper on justification of individual medical exposures for Diagnosis

- Provide clarity on the regulatory framework for justification
- Justification is not just one action, but a process including many different steps

HERCA organized a European Action Week on inspection of justification in radiology (2016)

www.herca.org
European Action Week
Coordinated inspection of justification in medical imaging

Purpose

• Assess whether the justification process takes place in the medical imaging facilities
• Identify week links in the justification process
• Increase the awareness on the necessity of justification in medical exposure
Method

- All HERCA countries invited to participate
- To inspect a representative number and type of facilities
- Inspections were notified in advance
- Performed according to a common inspection template
- Inspections based on document review, interviews and observations
Investigated topics

- Availability of procedures for the justification process (in QA-system)
- Assignment of responsibilities and tasks for justification
- Daily practise for evaluation of referrals
- Availability, awareness and use of referral guidelines
- Procedures for and performance of clinical audits
- Adequate knowledge, competence and training on the process of justification
- Overall quality of referrals
  - Review of 10 referrals per medical facility (5 X-ray, 5 CT)
Results – Participating countries

- Totally 17 countries participated and 148 inspections performed
- Nordic countries accounted for 37% of the inspections (totally 55)
  - Results not representative for Finland and Iceland, due to few inspections

Europe:
- Private: 44%
- Public: 56%

Nordic:
- Private: 31%
- Public: 69%
In general: Procedures for justification were available to a higher degree at facilities in the Nordic countries (82%) compared to European countries (55%).

Missing procedure: some kind of practical routine were often established.
Results – Content of procedures

- Most topics identified by HERCA as important for a proper justification process, were covered to some extent by the available procedures.
- Information to patient about benefits and risks was poorly addressed.
Results – Daily practice on evaluation of referrals

- Most Nordic facilities had established good practice for evaluation of referrals before the examinations were performed.
- Still too many inappropriate and unjustified examinations performed.
- Practice for communication between practitioner and referrer, and authorization of examinations must be improved.
- Allocation of responsibilities among involved staff not clearly defined at all inspected facilities
- Known by staff: Nordic (87%), Europe (76%)
- Documentation of delegation: Nordic (67%), Europe (52%)
Results – Referral guidelines for imaging

- Referral guidelines were present at most inspected facilities and made available to the referrers (except Iceland)
- Awareness and use were highly unsure in most countries
Results – Clinical audit

- Only Finland has fully implemented the concept of clinical audit among the Nordic countries
- Clinical audits are seldom performed
- **If not clinical audit:** Other types of audits/revisions were done in a higher degree at Nordic facilities (63%) than European (43%)
Results – Quality of referral
Administrative information

- Referrals were almost always available before exposure
- Quality of administrative information in referrals were good
  - Contact information to referrer were often missing (Finland)
Results – Quality of referral

Clinical information

• Overall quality with regards to clinical information could be improved
Conclusions

• Implementation of different steps in the justification process varied among countries
• Important that allocation of responsibilities and tasks among health professionals is recognized by the facility management
• Responsibilities and tasks related to the justification process is formalized in written procedures
• Involved staff receive proper training to take on the assigned tasks and responsibilities for justification
• Availability of referral guidelines are still missing in many countries
• The concept of clinical audit is not implemented to a satisfactory level across Europe
• A need to increase awareness and to reiterate the importance of justification in medical imaging
Upcoming HERCA initiative – 2019

European Awareness Week

• **Goal**: to launch a European awareness initiative in a coordinated process across several European countries focused on the justification of medical imaging involving ionizing radiations

• To be launched on the International Day of Radiology (8th of November 2019)

General flyer to introduce the campaign with the 7 questions