

Questioning standard imaging protocols

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The lack of a unitary specialist examination in Radiology, as well as other disciplines is an ongoing problem. Differences in content for the primary examinations, questions about the relative standards of the two final examinations (College and MMed) and problems in acceptance of the MMed degrees by overseas Colleges, all illustrate the unsatisfactory situation at present. This problem is being tackled urgently by the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa, and hopefully a suitable agreement between the universities offering the MMed degree and the Colleges of Medicine will be arrived at.

One positive feature of the MMed degree in Radiodiagnosis is the requirement that a research dissertation be submitted as part of the conditions for award of the degree. This obligatory requirement has generated considerable interesting material. Further, the ongoing budgetary crisis in the large teaching hospitals in South Africa, which never seems to improve and in fact in some provinces is deteriorating, coupled with an ever increasing patient workload, require these departments to scrutinise protocols rigorously in order to decrease costs and increase the throughput of patients. In this edition of the *SAJR* we highlight some of the dissertations done by registrars in our department to illustrate that sometimes protocols are followed more by rote than with good clinical foundation.

A welcome relief from the consequences of brutal violence, which forms such a large part of our work in state hospitals, is an ever increasing interest in the imaging of sports injuries. Sports imaging in South Africa has become the latest addition to the multifaceted Radiology discipline. The recent advances in high-quality radiography, high-resolution ultrasound, helical multi-slice CT and high field-strength MRI, have been able to demonstrate the musculoskeletal systems as never before. Interventional procedures under ultrasonic and CT guidance can accurately infiltrate areas of interest. Sports injuries are often subtle and difficult to pinpoint clinically. Radiology has demonstrated the ability to help the multidisciplinary sports medicine fraternity in the quest to establish the correct diagnosis, so as to expedite treatment and return the athlete to competitive level as soon as possible. Two of the papers in this edition of the *SAJR* illustrate the value of imaging in diagnosis of subtle sports injuries.

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