

# The radiologist — does s/he have a place in modern medicine?

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Why such a question at a time of rapid development in imaging modalities?

Technically radiology is moving forward rapidly; no other discipline in medicine has advanced to such an extent, but very few people outside our field seem to appreciate this.

So what role has the radiologist to play in the field of modern radiology?

- Is he the money machine for corporate medicine?
- Is he the technologist producing X-ray images as requested by clinicians, who most of the time don't read the report. Is the report worth reading?
- Is he bent on defrauding the Medical Aid Fund of money?
- Does he try to do more investigations than appropriate, pushing up the bills?
- Is he the faceless person who sends out big bills to patients?

Or is the radiologist, as a trained medical doctor, still a doctor in the true sense, treating his patients with compassion? Apart from all the advanced technology used to make correct diagnoses, can he still do a proper supportive clinical examination in the event of equivocal radiological findings; can he advise the patient regarding the best imaging protocol for a satisfactory diagnosis; and finally, do clinicians consult him on imaging issues and value his opinion?

The saying goes that a fool can ask more questions than a wise man can answer! While the radiologist answers complicated diagnostic questions every day, s/he often refuses to answer these basic questions. The time has come for us to stand together, to address these issues, and to move forward as diagnostic imaging specialists. We should stand our ground and control our destiny, lest we become only visitors in our own radiology units!

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