A paradise of opportunities for radiographers at ECR 2013

The quality of the ECR's sessions for radiographers has been given a welcome seal of approval from the European Federation of Radiographer Societies (EFRS) who recently elected the ECR as their official annual scientific meeting. EFRS president, **Professor Graciano Paulo** from the college of health technology of Coimbra, Portugal, has been coming to the ECR for more than a decade and firmly believes the upcoming congress boasts one of the best selections yet for radiographers.

Here he gives his personal preview of ECR 2013 and each of these sessions:

EFRS president, Prof. Graciano Paulo from Coimbra, Portugal, confirms that the ECR has become one of the most important meetings worldwide for radiographers.

Graciano Paulo: The ECR is really a paradise of opportunities. This congress is worth visiting just for the chance to meet people from throughout the profession, to network, and to get a wider perspective on the world of medical imaging. But of course the superb scientific sessions and the knowledge shared within them are the core of this meeting. The radiographers' sessions at the ECR have been increasing in quality every year, and for 2013 there will be some new additions to the programme that will make it one of the best ever. I would like to personally thank the chairs of the radiographers subcommittee, Dean Pekarovic and Valérie Vilgrain, who have ensured a very high quality programme, and I am also very grateful to ECR president Prof. Bilbao for giving us the opportunity to have the EFRS Meets session for the first time.

EFRS meets Spain
Saturday, March 9, 14:00–15:30

The EFRS is very optimistic about this session. It's the first year that this kind of session is being held, and by destiny we are meeting with one of the countries that the federation is really interested in. Spanish Radiographers have developed their professional competencies in recent years, and want to see that recognised by National Health and Education authorities, by transferring their education programmes into Higher Education Institutions. This session gives us a vital opportunity to discuss that, by observing the quality of their professional practice, and to reflect on the improvement in the quality of care expected, if the Spanish government give their radiographers the chance to be educated and trained at University level, as observed in almost all European countries.

All of the speakers in this session have more than 20 years of experience and belong to a group of 30 Spanish radiographers who decided to cross the border to study in Portugal at the College of Health Technology of Coimbra to obtain university diplomas. They are clearly strong advocates for the university system and excellent role models for other Spanish radiographers.

SF 7a: Radiographers and ultrasonography in Europe
Friday, March 8, 16:00–17:30

This is a very important session covering an issue that is a little controversial, because radiographers are not performing ultrasound in all EU countries. The session should give us a chance to see the main advantages of radiographers performing ultrasound themselves. We are very much in favour of the 'radiology family'; the idea that there should be permanent links between radiologists and radiographers in all techniques and modalities and that these techniques should be kept within the remit of the radiology department in order to deliver the best care possible for patients. The matter of who is allowed to perform ultrasound is completely unregulated and in several countries other professions use it with no experience or specialist knowledge and probably with less-than-ideal outcomes for patients.

RC 714: Clinical audit: from EURATOM to the clinical environment
Friday, March 8, 16:00–17:30

According to the literature, there is a severe lack of implementation of clinical audit, as described in the EURATOM treaty, in radiology departments in the majority of EU countries. In this session we will try to understand what is going on in Europe, looking at experiences in different countries with different models, and we will try to understand what kind of impact the implementation of these audit guidelines could bring to health systems. If you look at what should be controlled, assessed and evaluated in daily practice, it is all with the purpose of improving quality and patient security, and promoting a radiation protection culture. Even when clinical audit is not being implemented, it is important for radiographers to be aware of the concept and to know what to check in order to avoid errors.

RC 1114: Hot topics in magnetic resonance imaging
Saturday, March 9, 16:00–17:30

There are three separate but important topics being addressed in this session. The first will aim to help us gain a better understanding of what we mean when we talk about MR safety. The second will highlight how it is possible to do more with our MR systems and what radiographers can do to improve. The final talk is called 'Challenges and opportunities in paediatric MR' and provides a very good example of the way that radiographers need to think in all modalities. There are a tremendous number of factors challenging radiographers on a daily basis in all fields, but just as many opportunities to make those vital adjustments that can vastly improve the quality of the services we provide.

RC 1214: Dose optimisation in computed tomography
Sunday, March 10, 08:30–10:00

This is always an important topic for radiographers because technology is improving so fast that we always need to know how to keep up. Whenever we use CT we are using a modality that in the last ten years has increased the population dose more than five-fold. So the purpose of this session is for us to understand what kind of innovations are being made in dose optimisation; the possibilities of new equipment, new protocols, and the new ways of doing things that can help radiographers in daily practice to decrease dose not only in patients, but also in staff. It is always possible to do better with less, but there is not always a bridge between technological development and daily practice. So we need to develop a team concept in order to translate new advances into the hospital, to achieve better optimised procedures to decrease dose in the patient.

RC 1414: Towards advancing and developing the role of radiographers
Sunday, March 10, 14:00–15:30

This Refresher Course aims to help attendees understand the situations in different countries and how they have affected the development of the profession, as well as their impact on health systems and healthcare delivery. The take-home message will be that a profession can only develop if its body of knowledge is defined and a strategy is put in place to develop that body of knowledge. This has to involve research and particularly evidence-based practice research, so we will try to understand how we can do that research and implement the results in daily practice. Continued professional development is also very important in maintaining and improving the quality of care delivered to the patient. We hope that we can provide plenty of examples in this session for people to take home and hopefully use to influence change on a national level.

RC 1514: Hybrid imaging technologies
Sunday, March 10, 16:00–17:30

What are the recent developments in hybrid imaging technologies, what are they used for, and most importantly, how should radiography education look at them to understand what kind of output to provide for the market? There are currently only two or three countries that have separate education for nuclear medicine and radiography; in most countries they are combined. We have to look at this and see how it is possible to combine these two modalities, these two specialised fields, and still guarantee the quality of the young graduates that we put into the market and the quality of the care delivered to the patient. It is difficult, but by the end of this session we would like to understand how radiography education should develop in the future regarding emerging technology.