

COVID - 19: ISRRT develops resources for members to use in COVID-19 pandemic

Report by Donna Newman, ISRRT President

COVID-19 is a respiratory virus caused by a strain of coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2 that is infecting people in all countries around the world. Current evidence available suggests that the virus COVID-19, is transmitted from person to person through close contact and respiratory droplet transmission when a person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can enter the nose or mouth and subsequently be inhaled into the lungs. Transmission can also occur when a contaminated surface with droplets is touched by a person and they then touch their face, eyes or mouth. The evidence also suggests that COVID-19 isn't transmitted by airborne transmission.

Radiographers by virtue of their profession are at high risk of acquiring the COVID-19 virus. Radiographers are in close proximity with patients everyday as they perform medical imaging procedures. As frontline staff, radiography departments need to incorporate additional precautions for radiographers and support staff to protect themselves and prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in the healthcare setting.

The unprecedented COVID-19 virus is affecting many of our Radiographer colleagues around the world today. As a profession, we know these are turbulent times and we appreciate that radiographers/radiological technologists worldwide are serving as frontline professionals during this pandemic. ISRRT recognizes that your knowledge, care and efforts contribute greatly in the delivery and management of the care and treatment of patients affected by this pandemic. Thank you to those individuals from around the world that sent in best practice PPE pictures to share with our members.

The ISRRT Board of Management received requests from members when asked for resources on PPE and best practice information relating to radiology practice questions for COVID-19. Stewart Whitley, ISRRT Director of Professional Practice brought forward a request from the ISRRT Board of Management to develop technical documents relating specifically to best practice for radiographers at the March 27, 2020 WHO Non-governmental Organization (NGO) meeting. The WHO and other NGOs agreed with this proposal that more resources were needed specifically for the Medical Imaging and Therapy Departments. Some projects are already underway.

In response to the first meeting ISRRT has commenced work on a document which highlights informative best practices and procedures for all imaging modalities and therapy.

At short notice experts from around the world have contributed to the content of a publication gathering and reflecting best practices in their countries as well as current guidance publications issued by several professional societies.

COVID-19 ISRRT Response Document - appropriate and safe use of medical imaging and radiation therapy with infection control measures considered in addition to standard radiation protection procedures is a comprehensive technical guidance document which addresses the personal protective equipment necessary for personnel working in medical imaging and therapy centers.

The document considers the control of infection measures necessary to manage imaging and therapy procedures for patients who may carry the COVID-19 virus, as well as advising on measures for more complex and higher risk patients undergoing AGP's. All of these considerations are leveled against the necessary standard radiation protection and medical imaging safety measures.

The ISRRT Board of Management thanks the professional experts worldwide that are listed in the document. They took time, at short notice, to research and share best practice from their organisations, hospitals and countries to allow the gathering and comprehensive information provided in this document.

Please find the document available for download and dissemination at www.isrirt.org under the COVID-19 tab. As society members the ISRRT is asking all council members to help distribute this information to its members.

The ISRRT has also served on two committees with the WHO and IAEA. I, as President served on the writing committee for the IAEA/WHO COVID-19 Emergency in Nuclear Medicine Departments and provided information from our document to be included. Stewart Whitley, ISRRT Director of Professional Practice and I are currently serving on the writing committee call Rapid Advice Clinical Guide on appropriate use of radiological imaging in COVID-19.

E-Learning Platform on COVID-19 training for Radiographers

The ISRRT in partnership with the European Federation of Radiographer Societies (EFRS) developed an e-learning resources on COVID-19 for medical imaging radiographers across the world for mobile radiography and caring for our patients as frontline staff. This material will be free of charge and can be accessed starting on Tuesday April 21 at www.isrirt.org

The eLearning materials with emphasis on mobile chest radiography with the following sections:

- Introduction to viruses for radiographers; introduction to Covid-19 for radiographers
- Measures radiographers can take to minimise risk to themselves during professional working and their families
- Effective communication
- Mobile X-ray equipment
- Radiographic Procedure
- Radiation Protection
- Image review and reporting
- Patient informatics
- Audit and learning

Our ISRRT Regional Director of Europe, Efthimios Tim Agadacos has developed an e-learning on COVID-19 in computed tomography and will provide our members with best practice information relating to PPE and consideration when performing CT's on patients under investigation or COVID-19 positive on the ISRRT eLearning Platform.

On the ISRRT website www.isrirt.org there will be a new tab called COVID-19 where you will find all the important documents and information relating to COVID-19 pandemic. We have created a hyperlink to all our member societies' web pages that have COVID-19 information to make it easy access to finding important information relating to best practice.

Again know that the ISRRT appreciates our members' time and dedication to the fight against COVID-19 and because of your dedication we know our patients are getting the best care possible worldwide. As professionals by being a frontline worker you are impacting change, affecting change and creating change with the fight against the COVID-19 virus. ■