Medical societies establish European Alliance for Medical Radiation Protection Research (EURAMED)

For the first time, five medical societies within Europe, the European Society of Radiology together with the European Association of Nuclear Medicine (EANM), the European Federation of Organisations for Medical Physics (EFOMP), the European Federation of Radiographer Societies (EFRS) and the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO), have joined forces and agreed on a collaboration to improve the safe application of ionising radiation in medical care by developing and exploring common research strategies and by actively promoting the translation of results into clinical practice.

The EURAMED launch event took place during the European Radiation Protection Week in September 2016 in Oxford, UK.

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EURAMED complements existing and established European platforms in several other fields of radiation protection and will create visibility for the medical field in this context. The other platforms are:

• Multidisciplinary European Low Dose Initiative (MELDID)
• European Radiation Dosimetry Group (EURADOS)
• European Platform for Nuclear and Radiological Emergency Response and Recovery (NERIS)
• European Radiocology Alliance (ALLIANCE)

The first major step in overcoming the fragmentation and lack of visibility for radiation protection in the medical field was the development of a common strategic research agenda (SRA). For this, a group of representatives named by the medical associations dealing with ionising radiation has worked together to identify the most important topics in radiation protection research in medical applications.

The research topics considered necessary and most urgent for effective medical care and efficient in terms of radiation protection are summarised in five main themes:

1. Measurement and quantification
2. Normal tissue reactions, radiation-induced morbidity and long-term health problems
3. Optimisation of radiation exposure and harmonisation of practices
4. Justification of the use of ionising radiation in medical practice
5. Infrastructures for quality assurance

This SRA is considered a living document, and hence any comments and suggestions by stakeholders or facilitators of medical radiation protection are most welcome. The current version was approved by the boards of the five societies in November 2015, and has been available since July 2016 at www.euramed.eu. In addition, it has been submitted for publication to Insights into Imaging.

The long-term goal of EURAMED is to establish an independent and sustainable platform in order to increase its visibility and become eligible for participation in European and international projects. Establishing EURAMED as a legal entity is considered important in order to facilitate and coordinate European research activities in the area of medical radiation protection. This will allow it to assume an umbrella function for the harmonisation of practice, ensuring an improvement in the European radiation protection safety culture within medicine.

The EURAMED Working Group (as of December 2016) comprises: Christoph Hoeschen (Magdeburg/DE, Chair), John Damilakis (EFOMP), Wolfgang Dörri (ESTRO), Guy Frija (ESR), Gerhard Glattling (EANM), Johann Lambricht (ESTRO), Konstantinos Mylios (EANM), Graciano Paulo (EFRS), Wolfmert Stiller (ESR), Virginia Taipaki (EFOMP), Jonathan McNulty (EFRS) and Monika Hierath (EIBIR, Support).

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