

ACADEMIC RADIOLOGY IN PAKISTAN:

The current era of modern medicine is the era of evidence based practice; this equally applies to radiology because it has now tremendous value in patient care in terms of diagnosis and management of disease. Academic radiology is the prime source of evidence generation and implication for evidence based practice in radiology beside its main responsibility as nourishing mother for future radiologists. In Pakistan academic radiology although exist but not very well developed as it should be after fifty years of independence from Britain. This slow growth of academics could be related to false paradigm of radiology, considered mainly as service providing speciality because of high initial capital investment, increased burden of patients, inadequate infrastructure, shortage of skilled personal, migration of trained radiologists to outside Pakistan for better opportunities, non-availability of appropriately western trained academic radiologist and lack of scholarly vision amongst the specialty leaders who were primarily trained as service provider. These determinants anticipated by mushroom growth of radiology centers in last decade equipped with newer expensive technology without testing or validation of adopted techniques, machines, parameters, imaging algorithms, protocols and cost-effective analysis in our population. In our country there are at least two major challenges for academic radiology development. First is the lack of appropriate research in radiology and second is the lower financial support for radiologist in academic departments as compare to private radiology practice in terms of salary support. Many contributing factors are responsible for these two major challenges including (1) shortage of research oriented radiologists (2) lack of basic epidemiological and research methods training for radiologist (3) non-research oriented radiology residency curriculum (4) inadequate departmental or institutional support (4) inadequate radiology research funding opportunities and (5) huge salary discrepancy in private and academic practice.

The prevailing condition might be changed in future with the initiatives taken by college of physicians and surgeons Pakistan and higher education commission of Pakistan with more emphasis on research in post graduate curriculum and better health service structure. Pakistan medical and dental council and radiological society of Pakistan can also play an important role in promoting academic radiology in our country. First grass-roots initiative taken by radiological society of Pakistan by organizing first national radiology research workshop at the occasion of 10th international radiological conference Karachi to provide participants about basic knowledge regarding epidemiology and biostatistics related to radiology, plagiarism, literature search methods, common mistakes and their solutions in CPSP synopsis, ideas and opportunities in imaging related studies. This type of activities should be held regularly and also at regional levels. Head of radiology departments and hospital heads can play an important role in academic radiology development through better salary structure, hiring and retention of faculty having research skills, newer postgraduate training curriculum, scholarly working environment, regular journal clubs and rewarding mechanism for scholarly achievements. Further more if we want to save the future of radiology in Pakistan to provide evidence based and cost-effective radiology services to our needy patients, this is the right time to take initiatives for strengthening academic radiology in our country.

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