

Turf issues pose greatest single challenge for radiology



Philip Ward, Editor

Radiologists feel under increasing threat from other healthcare professionals, both at home and from overseas. That seems to be the overriding conclusion of a survey we conducted of *DI Europe's* Editorial Advisory Board members during February and March.

In the killer question, we asked our advisors to state the single most important challenge facing the imaging community today. The wide variety of the 17 responses confirms that a range of complex issues will need to be addressed over the coming months and years if the profession is to continue to prosper.

But no fewer than six respondents cited turf battles as the biggest challenge. One of these six board members expressed concern about MRI falling into the hands of other disciplines, while others referred to the importance of not losing turf to specialized clinicians and to the growing threat from other specialties due to the lack of subspecialty training in radiology. Fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, free of boundaries, was also given as a top priority.

Another person stressed the urgent need to defend radiology in Europe because purchasing imaging services in India is becoming so much cheaper. The focus is not always on quality and what is best for the patient, but often on money only, wrote the advisor. In a similar vein, erosion of the specialty and the lack of integrity in radiology were given by another respondent as major areas of concern.

What else is on the minds of our editorial board? Two people listed staff shortages as the greatest challenge, and another was worried about the overall reduction in healthcare expenses in Europe versus increasing investment costs. One advisor voiced concern about the explosion of image data, while others cited molecular imaging, economic pressures, and noninvasiveness as key issues for the future.

Another board member singled out the conservatism of the imaging community and its failure to adapt to changing demands and environments. The difficulty of handling technological development, together with an increasing workload partly due to the demands of middle-aged and elderly patients and oncology and trauma sufferers, was another response. One advisor emphasized the need to find alternatives for imaging technology that uses ionizing radiation.

Finally, demand is increasing for imaging to guide diagnosis and therapy, and imaging specialists therefore need to have a very broad spectrum of knowledge of clinical medicine, wrote an advisor. As a result, there should be more self-confidence in the imaging community and more public awareness that imaging specialists are guiding therapy.

We discussed these and other topical issues at *DI Europe's* annual board meeting, held during the European Congress of Radiology in Vienna. This meeting always helps to shape our editorial strategy for the year ahead, so you can look forward to reading more about these subjects in forthcoming issues. ■

Staff shortages, radiation risks, and growing workload are other concerns