How much ethics can we afford?

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With today's pressure on cost effectiveness in health care in combination with an increasing privatisation and entrepreneurship, there is at least a possibility for a conflict of interest in what to do and to which costs.

On one side, there is the health economist's wish for an efficient health care (value in relation to cost) and the other side, the patient's wish to get an investigation.

Then the question, how much ethics can we afford, can be raised.

1. Pre-test probability. The indication of an investigation has to be thoroughly scrutinized. Who is to decide when there is a clinical suspicion relevant enough for ordering an MR examination? What is the pre-test probability and in relation to that, who can choose/decide the technique, thus must the radiologists do all investigations that are required by clinicians.

2. When there is a decision on MR examination to be performed, who decides the number of pulse sequences, contrast medium injection or no? How expanded is it defendable to make an investigation?

3. Who shall decide when an investigation is finished? Is it when the radiologist has fulfilled the request of referral physician and whether he wants another investigation, should he just send the patient back with a recommendation or should he immediately perform the X-ray investigation if needed?

4. How much of an investigation is the radiologist responsible to review? If an MR angiography is required, is he also responsible to look for other things than the vessels etc?

These difficult but interesting topics will be discussed in more detail during the presentation.