Challenges to the implementation of Evidence Based Radiology

There has been an increased focus on Evidence Based Imaging methodologies in recent years. This introduction of Evidence Based Imaging is timely, given the increasing costs of and concerns regarding the quality of health care. Diagnostic imaging ranks second only to pharmacology in the highest percentage of health care costs. One third of health care (and diagnostic imaging) is estimated to be duplicative and unnecessary. The interest in Evidence Based Imaging methodologies are also driven by fears of the downstream effects of ionizing radiation delivered by many imaging modalities.

The implementation of Evidence Based Imaging faces many difficulties, challenges and barriers. In many areas of diagnostic imaging, the evidence is currently lacking or is not yet mature enough to be implemented into the main stream and or guidelines. Uncertainty and lack of knowledge on the part of health care providers continues to drive inappropriate or duplicative imaging. Much effort and resources will be required to obtain sufficient evidence to implement across all areas of diagnostic imaging. Pressure from patients and referring physicians who fear litigation or are unwilling to live with any degree of uncertainty will also impede the dissemination of Evidence Based Imaging.

Last but not least, the threat to the livelihood of the various stakeholders presents a barrier to the widespread acceptance of Evidence Based Imaging.