

A Web-based ICRP Resource to Inform Healthcare Providers on the Risks and Benefits of Ionizing Radiation in Medicine

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This task consists of updating ICRP's web-based module "Radiation and Your Patient: A Guide for Medical Practitioners". The key elements of this task are: to clearly identify the target audience (such as healthcare providers with an emphasis on primary care); to review other reputable sources of information; and to succinctly publish what ICRP contributes to the discussion. There has been an exponential increase in the utilisation of diagnostic imaging and procedures as they are generally much less invasive than the traditional or historic diagnostic procedures. A "Q and A" format addressing practical and pragmatic topics has been chosen. Such topics include benefits and risks of ionising radiation in generic medical settings, as well as in the context of pregnant or breast feeding patients. In general, the benefits of medical imaging and related procedures far outweigh the potential risk associated with ionising radiation exposure. However, it is still important to ensure that the examinations are clinically justified, that the procedure is optimised to deliver the lowest dose commensurate with the medical purpose, and that consideration is given to diagnostic reference levels for particular classes of examinations.