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DIRECTIVE PUTS MRI AT RISK

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July 2007
MEP, Liz Lynne, has warned that proposed magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) legislation must be amended or lives will be at risk – a view supported by the recently published Crozier report.

The EU Directive on Electro Magnetic Fields limits the amount of time staff can be exposed to electromagnetic fields in the workplace. It is estimated that it could affect up to eight million MRI examinations across Europe, including 400,000 procedures involving children, the seriously ill and 80,000 people under anaesthesia.*

The British Institute of Radiology (BIR), via its Magnetic Resonance (MR) Committee, was one of the first groups to bring the issue to the attention of MR users in the UK. Andrew Jones, chairman of BIR's magnetic resonance committee and a consultant clinical scientist at the Christie Hospital NHS Trust, told Clinical Services Journal:

"The institute supports the principle of ensuring an effective framework for managing staff safety in MR, but is very concerned about the severe negative impact the proposed Directive may have on both MR imaging in health care and its restriction on research and development in the field of MR."

He added that the institute has great concerns over the application of significant generalisations for what is scientifically a very complex subject. He warned that in its original form, the Directive threatened to severely impact on routine scanning in terms of the working practices of staff within the MR examination room and would prevent many areas of important research and development taking place in the UK and Europe.

"In particular, the management of young children and sick or anxious patients within the MR environment would be restricted in such a way that some investigations could not take place and these patient groups would, as a result, be forced to undergo x-ray examinations with a concomitant exposure of the patient and staff to ionising radiation," said Jones.

Following extensive lobbying, the Commission has announced that it intends to postpone the implementation date of the Directive by up to two years.

* Figures from Gabriel Krestin, Professor of Radiology at Erasmus University, Rotterdam

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FEATURE ARTICLE

Perioperative practice under the spotlight



The Association for Perioperative Practice (AIPP) annual congress and exhibition recently took place at Harrogate. With surgery in primary care becoming increasingly common and significant changes afoot in the role of PCTs, the conference looked at the major impact this will have on perioperative practitioners in acute hospitals. LOUISE FRAMPTON reports.

PRODUCT ARTICLE

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