

The new national incident learning system in clinical imaging, MRI and nuclear medicine

The value of incident and near miss reporting and the associated learning is well appreciated in the UK radiotherapy community. To date, there has been no national reporting and learning system specifically intended to analyse and learn from incidents in diagnostic imaging, MRI and nuclear medicine in the UK. The Medical Exposures Group (MEG) in UKHSA has been tasked with developing a national system for shared learning from radiation incidents.

What can a national incident learning system achieve?

This national incident learning system will support trend analysis of radiation incidents (ionising and non-ionising) and near misses. The system involves a nationally agreed coding taxonomy to reflect the particular types of incidents that occur in MRI, including both equipment and procedural incidents. The coding system offers a streamlined approach for the analysis of MRI incidents and near misses. This provides an opportunity for learning from incidents and near misses which will allow staff to identify trends and help reduce and mitigate the risk of the incidents reoccurring.

At a local level, the national incident reporting and learning system will support clinical staff in reporting incidents and near misses in a standardised way and strengthen reporting cultures within departments. At a national level this system will allow departments to benchmark their local analysis against the national picture. It is hoped this will assist with identifying emerging issues that perhaps may not be easily identified on a local level. In terms of patient safety, the analysis of the data will help direct future learning and inform risk assessments so these events may be mitigated.

The practicalities

A robust incident coding system is crucial to the effectiveness of the national incident learning system. A multidisciplinary working party with modality specialists from across the four nations have been involved in the developing the [coding taxonomy](#).

[User guidance](#) has been further developed to support MRI departments in the application of the coding system. It provides a practical approach to implementation via a wealth of examples and scenarios. It is envisaged departments will adopt these taxonomies and include the relevant coding in reports within their local reporting systems. MEG plan to extract the relevant coded incident data from existing systems such as Learning From Patient Safety Events and newly developed systems such as Once for Wales. Individual departments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Independent Sector will also have the opportunity to submit data directly to UKHSA. This is a voluntary system and does not replace statutory reporting requirements already in place. MEG have worked with regulators including MHRA to ensure the coding can be mapped across systems.

The submitted incident data will be analysed by MEG. Results and learning will be published in regular reports on the gov.uk website, supporting shared learning for MRI centres across the UK.

The next steps – we need you!

Departments are encouraged to consider adopting the new incident coding system and participating in this important piece of work. The links to the coding and user guidance can be found below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/medical-radiation-uses-dose-measurements-and-safety-advice>



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