"@InfoRadiologia": Communicating Effectively with Patients. SERAM strategy to become more patient-centred using the power of the internet and social media.

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Background/Introduction

Over recent years, particularly over the last 5 years, a big concern has come to the forefront in the Radiology Community, "The radiologist's invisibility". Different strategies have been proposed to address it. If patients, other doctors and ourselves do not understand our role in radiology, in patient care and in the Health System, our future becomes uncertain. If radiologists become invisible, we will become replaceable, without a future.

1.- Loss of the Radiologist's visibility

Since the development of CT in the 1970s and MRI in the 1980s radiologists have become less visible to patients (with a few exceptions such as interventional radiology and gastroenterology). The radiologist invisibility has been the subject of debate in radiological scientific societies and radiology congresses, especially in the European and American ones (ECR, RSNA, ARRS); Deborah Abrams Kaplan: The Radiologist's Image (Diagnostic Imaging, 2012, http://www.diagnosticimaging.com/). There are also many publications warning about the essential invisibility of radiologists, which needs to be addressed urgently, particularly in a hostile background, when our value and function is being questioned due to the emergence of teleradiology, and turf battles with other disciplines on some areas of imaging (1, 2, 3).

There are some questions that radiologists, Radiological Scientific Societies and Health Authorities must answer if we want a "visible" future:

1.1.- What do our patients know about what a radiologist is or does in a radiology department in the Health care system?

1.2.- How is it that radiologists are so invisible to their patients and what is the long-term consequence of this loss of visibility ?.

1.3.- What were the main factors that led us to this invisibility, considering the breakthrough of radiology over the last century ?

1.4.- Who is giving the information about radiation doses or radiological reports to the patients?

For the last several years, Radiology Departments have moved further away from a patient-focused model to concentrate on volume of studies (Mary C. Mahoney, MD, said at RSNA 2015: https://www.rsna.org/Mary_C_Mahoney.aspx). This has resulted that radiologists are for most patients, the personnel running the "photo department". In a recent study in Belgium, almost 50% of surveyed patients did not even realize that
radiologists were doctors and 62.2% of the patients wrongly identified the radiographer as a radiologist (4).

Direct contact between radiologists and patients is scarce. For the patients, radiological exams may seem like some painful or inconvenient intrusion into their privacy, carried out in a mysterious or frightening place. The perception is further altered by the fact that patients typically do not choose their radiologist; the referring physician, the Health Service or another intermediary usually makes that choice. Historically, radiologists' official written reports have functionally been proprietary communications between radiologists and referring physicians. Although never secret, these reports have traditionally been archived in the medical record, with tightly controlled access. Patients rarely viewed reports directly.

2.- The future patient: "the emerging patient"

The "emerging patient" is a proactive patient who uses Information and Communication Technology and takes responsibility for his/her own health (table 1). Our patients have changed and use Health Apps and Internet actively (www.somospacientes.com/).

Table 1.- "Emerging" patients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARE INFORMED</th>
<th>INTERACT</th>
<th>REQUIRE</th>
<th>KNOW</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>about their disease and available therapeutic alternatives</td>
<td>with the other agents of the health system on the Internet</td>
<td>immediate responses via any digital channel and anywhere</td>
<td>their rights and demand answers adapted to their needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Patients are informed people and are no longer satisfied with passive information regarding their health. They even have congresses and have started to attend and give presentations in medical congresses (http://www.meetup.com/es/Health-2-0-Barcelona-Chapter/events/227592279/)

and are members of Patients’ Associations and Committees with an active presence on Internet social media networks. The health information web portal and patient portals are a reality (5).

Patients have knowledge about radiation doses. Cancer patients want more information about the risks and benefits associated with radiation in the exams they undergo. They want to understand how tests like PET, CT and MRI differ and why one specific test is selected instead of another, or why multiple tests are sometimes ordered (6).
The dark side of Internet for patients is the danger of unfiltered information. Every day more and more patients rely on Dr. Google to request information for their health problems. And the Internet, in inexperienced or biased hands has the potential of causing enormous damage. On the Internet we can find everything, from sensible information and recommendations to absurd but appealing theories that can lead the patients astray. It is well-known the case of a famous guru of an important computer company whose incorrect information, analyzed without basic knowledge, led him to a misleading decision and finally to his death. Internet does not mean that physical doctors will not be necessary. In fact, physical doctors are more necessary than ever to guide the patients through the forest of contradictory information that Dr Google throws at us. And also, the importance of trustworthy WebPages coming from prestigious sources like scientific associations should not be underrated.

3.- What are the present and future role of the radiologist in a patient-centered health care system?

Radiology is now the key diagnostic tool for most diseases and has an important role in monitoring treatment and predicting outcome. Many of the treatments that are available today are based on the results of imaging tests. There is no doubt that the future of healthcare will be technology-driven, and it's hard to find a medical specialty more grounded in technology than radiology. Transparency is now a public and professional expectation where radiologists have much to gain regarding visibility.

4.- How To be visible to our patients and Medical Community?

Radiological Professional organizations must intensify their existing efforts to familiarize the public and the media with the radiologist's invaluable role in medicine and healthcare, and patients' need to view their doctors as partners, take an active interest in their health, and "co-author" their records.

Because there is no 'one size fits all' approach, the best opportunity to improve patient care to patient-centered care, is to respond to the wide range of desires with an appropriately wide-ranging variety of information, then allow patients to choose what best suits their needs.

The radiologists should lead the change, "This is a responsibility that radiologists should relish, pursue, and take seriously. We should be leading change because if you let someone make changes who doesn't understand what we do, it will be damaging our patients," (Frank Lexa, MD, MBA. Radiology residency director for Drexel University College of Medicine, at RSNA 2015. http://www.diagnosticimaging.com/rsna-2015/radiologists-need-lead-change?).
We need to step out from behind the monitors to adopt a leadership role in healthcare being visible to patients. We must introduce ourselves to our patients, explain the procedures of the radiological examination, and directly communicate results and report to the patient. We must advocate for radiological installation design that promote radiologist-patient interaction. The radiologist must be at the centre of a multidisciplinary team in the health care process.

"Social media use is just one of a number of ways that you can increase your communication with those you serve, their caregivers, and with others in the health care arena to gain insight on how you might improve the care you provide and your patient's satisfaction with that care. "We either have to lead using digital tools or the digital tools will take it away from you". (James V. Rawson, MD, FACR. chair of the ACR. Commission on Patient and Family-Centered Care. ACR.org).

5.- Visibility measures taken by radiology Societies

The American College of Radiology and the RSNA stated 5 years ago: "Give radiology a face!"; and how to communicate with patients and how to make Radiology more patient-centered have been the focus in all RSNA congresses over the last 5 years.

Both RSNA in 2012 and ACR in 2015 launched 2 patient-centered campaigns. The RSNA Radiology Cares™ Campaign and The new American College of Radiology (ACR®) Commission on Patient Experience. Both campaigns are designed to help radiology professionals optimize their patient’s experiences throughout their radiological care. "Increased engagement helps improve your patient's awareness and appreciation for the integral role you play in their healthcare. In addition, patient-centered practice enhances their understanding and comfort with their radiology tests and procedures and empowers them to make better informed decisions about their healthcare" (7, 8).

The European Society of Radiology (ESR) created a "Patient Advisory Group" (ESR-PAG) to address the issue of communication between radiology professionals (radiologists, radiographers, residents, nurses, administrators, etc.) and their patients. Initiated in 2013, the group represents many patient groups, working together with the ESR to raise awareness of medical imaging amongst patients, improve patient knowledge about imaging procedures, liaise on policy issues of common interest, involve patient representatives in strategic decisions regarding medical imaging and ensure that a patient-centred, "human" approach is embedded in the structure of the ESR (9, 10).

Other ESR initiatives saw the active contribution of patients. During the Management in Radiology (MIR) 2013 meeting held in Barcelona, patient representative T. Szelagowski (EPF) gave a talk on "eHealth-patients' perspective" and during a high level roundtable discussion on the "Role of Imaging in Personalised Medicine" organised by the ESR and the European Alliance for Personalised Medicine (EAPM), which took place at
the European Parliament in Brussels in October 2013, the patients’ point of view was presented by patient representative Erik Briërs, Ex Officio Board Member of Europa Uomo—the European Prostate Cancer Coalition.

The Alliance for MRI, founded by the ESR, and including Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), patient groups and the scientific community, with the aim to ensure unimpeded access to MRI technology for all patients across the EU, was successfully concluded in early summer 2013. It serves as a good example for the importance of combined efforts between patient organizations and the scientific community.

The Spanish Society of Medical Radiology (SERAM) was permeable to all these initiatives and has also questioned how to increase visibility and to perform a more patient-centered radiology. SERAM current president, Dr. José Luis del Cura stated: "For both clinicians and patients it is very important to know who is behind a radiological report. Modern medicine still requires radiologists who are present, they can be consulted and whom clinicians can trust. Physicians, and patients should worry about knowing who their radiologist is" (11).
Description of activity and work performed

SERAM launched several initiatives to become more visible to patients and the most important initiative was the development of InfoRadiologia, created as a patient space in our Radiology Society.

1.-What is InfoRadiologia?

InfoRadiología is a Web page created by the SERAM (http://seram.es) that pursues familiarizing the public and the media with the radiologists’ invaluable role in medicine and healthcare, as a webpage to bond both patients’ and radiologists’ interests and as a space to deal with questions of both patients and their families, and to answer patients’ questions related to the techniques, procedures and available radiological therapies.

All material on this site is monitored and approved by SERAM experts.

The InfoRadiologia web page is linked to the SERAM web page: (http://www.inforadiologia.org),

See video: https://youtu.be/2c0dpxFnrUE

InfoRadiologia follows the Health On the Net criteria and achieved the Accreditation (HONcode ID number: HONConduct995599)

2.- Introduction of InfoRadiologia to patients

This webpage was presented to patients in a meeting held in Madrid, the 6th of February, 2014. (http://www.inforadiologia.org/modules.php?name=news&lang=es&idnew=400 de Google). Fig. 1 on page 15.

SERAM wanted to explain to the patients the present role of Radiology. InfoRadiologia enables patients and families to access reliable information and is supervised by medical specialists in issues as presented:

• The progress of diagnostic imaging.

• The role of radiologists in their illnesses.

• The different applications of imaging technologies (benefits for the patient, availability, associated risks ...)

• The information needed to be prepared and to perform a radiology exam (X-rays, CT scans, MRI, ....).
The participants in this meeting were:

- **SERAM members**: Dr Carmen Ayuso (SERAM president and radiologist at Hospital Clinic, Barcelona), Dr. Javier Rodriguez-Recio (Communications Chair of SERAM, member on board of The Federation of Scientific Medical Associations Medical (FACME in spanish) and Head of the Radiology Department at General Hospital. Segovia), Dr. Milagros Otero-Garcia (co-editor of the web page and social media networks: facebook and twitter and radiologist at Complexo Hospitalario Universitario de Santiago de Compostela) and Dr. Fátima Matute (SERAM’s secretary and radiologist at Hospital Clínico Universitario de Madrid).

- **Ministry of Health**: Jose Melquiades Ruiz-Olano (Technical advisor on Health Strategy Areas of the General Department of Quality Department) and Dr. Ana Chacon (The deputy director of Patient Information of the Counseling of Health of the Autonomous Region of Madrid).

- **Patient Associations**: More than 12 patients’ associations participated in the debate.

**Main conclusions of the meeting between patients and radiologists:**

2.1 The information offered on the Internet is becoming ever more abundant but is often obsolete and from unknown untrustworthy sources. The contribution of medical scientific societies, as in this case SERAM in *InfoRadiologia*, is important to provide reliable information.

2.2 Patients are demanding complete, truthful and intelligible information. The information enables the patient to decide with as much knowledge as possible. The health professional should inform and guide patients to seek and complete all the information they need.

2.3 Health Administration, the Ministry of Health Services and the different regional health authorities must support patient associations and provide access to trusted and easily accessible information, guidelines and protocols and training programs for patients and families. An affordable list of reference centres and clinical trials for diseases must be available.

2.4 It is necessary to standardize diagnostic and therapeutic criteria throughout the ambit of the National Health System. Expert guidelines and protocols are not adequately disseminated. Compliance with them is required.
2.5 Information should be directed not only to patients, but to physicians (including radiologists) as well. They must have the best knowledge available.

2.6 Radiology is a specialty based on technology and equipment. Both require appropriate upgrade and maintenance. Rapid incorporation of innovations has proven to be useful for professionals.

2.7 Patients know and value the importance of radiologists in the clinical process and demand greater accessibility to them for consultation. Patients believe that platforms like InfoRadiologia can help, but also demand a personal relationship with their radiologists.

2.8 There is a demand for more information on the possible risks of ionizing radiation and the use of contrast in diagnosis. InfoRadiologia already provides this information but will keep expanding it.

2.9 It is an agreement on the coordinated use of the different websites and social networks to increase communication between associations, and groups of patients with radiologists, and to post (SERAM and patients) all this content on InfoRadiologia.

2.10 SERAM is committed to the dissemination of this information to patients' associations, radiologists, health authorities, media and other medical specialties through the Federation of Medical Science (FACME).

This meeting got huge coverage by Spanish media including national newspapers and TV:

- https://www.facebook.com/actualmedradiology/posts/1452637451620716

3.- Increasing our visibility campaign: What is your radiologist’s name?

InfoRadiologia supported several initiatives promoted by associations of patients and from SERAM to send information to radiologists, radiographers, non-radiologists doctors and patients such as "Don't do recommendations", a consensus document following Choosing Wisely initiative, that includes some recommendations to avoid unnecessary studies to avoid radiation:
Promoted Eurosafe Imaging publications: a consensus document

One of the most important initiatives was a campaign to increase radiologists’ visibility "What’s your radiologist’s name?" with these key points:

- A close and direct relationship with the patients to report on risks, benefits and results of their tests is necessary.
- Patients have the right to know the name of the radiologist who reports their exams and image-guided procedures.
- Imaging is very important and is leading the future in medicine.
- Radiologists are physicians, highly skilled specialists with an important role in our health.

The campaign was widely covered by media, radio, TV, Industry web pages, hospitals and also social media with the hashtag #miradiologo ("myradiologist") on twitter. **Fig. 2 on page 15.**

- [http://noticias.lainformacion.com/salud/occidentales/los-radiologos-inician-una-campana-de-informacion-sobre-las-ventajas-y-riesgos-de-las-pruebas-de-imagen-medica_yTsc6kfrc7Abwps1H3vyi1](http://noticias.lainformacion.com/salud/occidentales/los-radiologos-inician-una-campana-de-informacion-sobre-las-ventajas-y-riesgos-de-las-pruebas-de-imagen-medica_yTsc6kfrc7Abwps1H3vyi1)

See youtube videos:

[https://youtu.be/KFnJm2Vg4XE](https://youtu.be/KFnJm2Vg4XE), [https://youtu.be/AxFXcHTtwwo?list=PLLVR1dgM4GqNoWluxFtFOHcGUHePu67q](https://youtu.be/AxFXcHTtwwo?list=PLLVR1dgM4GqNoWluxFtFOHcGUHePu67q)
4.- Information content in the InfoRadiologia webpage

When a patient accesses this site he/she gets radiological information and direct access to Facebook and Twitter.

Regarding radiological information content, it is divided into these different links:

4.1 Radiology areas: seven different areas are described: abdominal, musculoskeletal, neuroradiology, breast, lung, pediatrics, vascular and interventional radiology. Each area contains information regarding the different radiology techniques used in every subspecialty (http://www.inforadiologia.org/modules.php?name=webstructure&lang=es&idwebstructure=266).

4.2 Radiology techniques: all the radiology techniques available nowadays are described following these parameters: what's the technique like, what's it used for, patient preparation for the different techniques, how does each technique work, how is the different exploration performed with each technique, benefits, risks and limitations of each technique (http://www.inforadiologia.org/modules.php?name=webstructure&lang=es&idwebstructure=321).

4.3 Radiology department staff: different types of personnel that work in a radiology department (radiologists, radiographers, nurses, radiophysics, nuclear medicine specialists, clerks and paramedical personnel) are described, so too the qualifications and studies needed to achieve each category (http://www.inforadiologia.org/modules.php?name=webstructure&lang=es&idwebstructure=362).


4.5 Information: information regarding new radiological advances, consent forms, documents of SERAM of interest to patients and frequent questions and answers about radiological examinations or techniques (http://www.inforadiologia.org/modules.php?name=webstructure&lang=es&idwebstructure=375).


4.6 Other recommended webs: links to other webs of interest to patients; Regional Health care governments, radiology webs for patients such as the
4.7 About InfoRadiologia: it describes what InfoRadiologia is, who makes and edits this webpage (SERAM members radiologists and SERAM subsections: Quality and Management, Interventional and vascular, Breast imaging, Musculoskeletal, neuroradiology sections) and some use warnings of the webpage (http://www.inforadiologia.org/modules.php?name=webstructure&lang=es&idwebstructure=368).

InfoRadiología also contains a link access to a glossary of radiological terms and definitions and access to send any question the patient wants to ask.

5.- InfoRadiología on Social Media

InfoRadiologia is present on social media networks as Twitter and Facebook. Both pages were opened the 23rd of November 2013. Co-editor Dr. Milagros Otero-Garcia is in charge of these websites and posts the radiological and other medical information in Spanish and English that she considers to be important to InfoRadiologia followers (patients, radiologists, other doctors, industry....). SERAM also posts valuable information on the websites. Information sources are SERAM, other Medical Societies, Newspapers (general and Health publications), Industry publications, Radiology Congresses, Patients' associations journals, Health Ministers of the different countries, EU Parliament, etc.

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/inforadiologia

InfoRadiología Facebook page has reached a high media impact. Its statistics are impressive: each week it receives an average of 400 likes on the information posted on the front page, and a range of 500 people and an average of 40 people participate with comments on them. Facebook followers are mainly 24-54 year-old Spanish women (60%).

Twitter: https://twitter.com/inforadiologia

It has a large number of followers and retweets. Twitter is more followed and used by Patients' Associations and Industry members to follow our information and at the same time, to send us theirs.

What kind of information is posted on Facebook and twittered/re-tweeted on Twitter?

Here are just a few examples of the posted information.
5.1 Presence of Radiology in a personalized and patient-centered medicine Fig. 3 on page 16.

5.2 Radiation doses and special issues such as radiation doses in pediatric population.

5.3 Prevention and recommendation measures we can promote as radiologists and images of educational value for patients as popular science Fig. 4 on page 17.

5.4 Information on radiology examinations regarding preparation for radiology studies, equipment… Fig. 5 on page 18.

5.5 All the technical advances in Radiology equipment, publications of the industry and the effects of the global crisis on our equipment replacement.

5.6 The new advances in diagnosis presented in radiology congresses.

5.7 Patients’ Associations information, industry or other Medical Societies news, to share and spread with radiologists, patients and other physicians Fig. 6 on page 19.

5.8 Radiology throughout our history.

5.9 As a social network it is also a social meeting point, where you can see parties and celebrations congratulating our patients and supporters in general Fig. 7 on page 20.
Images for this section:

Fig. 1

© SERAM
¿Cómo se llama tu radiólogo?

#miradiologo

- Es necesaria una relación cercana y directa del paciente con su radiólogo, que le informe de riesgos, ventajas y resultados de sus pruebas.
- Tenemos derecho a conocer el nombre del radiólogo que informa nuestras radiografías, pruebas médicas de imagen y en muchas ocasiones nos realiza procedimientos terapéuticos.
- La radiología o diagnóstico por imágenes es muy importante en la medicina actual.
- Los radiólogos son médicos especialistas altamente cualificados que intervienen de forma importante sobre nuestra salud.

Fig. 2

© SERAM
Fig. 3

© SERAM
¿Cuál es la radiación que recibimos cuando realizamos una exploración radiológica?


Be Informed About the Safe Use of Ionizing Radiation in Medicine

Information to help health professionals achieve safer use of radiation in medicine for the benefit of patients

SAFRAD
Radiation & Cataract

Posters
Smart Card

8 personas alcanzadas

Promocionar publicación

Fig. 4

© SERAM
scanxiety: ESTRÉS antes del TAC, PET, RMN: consejos para sobrellevarlo

"scanxiety" Estás sentado en la sala de espera, tu corazón se acelera, las palmas están sudando y tu presión arterial está aumentando. Has tenido dificultad...

COLECTIVOGIST.WORDPRESS.COM

Fig. 5

© SERAM
Fig. 6

© SERAM
Fig. 7

© SERAM
Conclusion and Recommendations

1.- There is no future for the speciality of radiology if we do not value our patients and do not share with them our reports and experience.

2.- Radiology Societies in general and radiologists in particular, must make ourselves visible to our patients and colleagues putting mutual and direct communication as the main value in our interrelationship.

3.- Social Media sites are very useful tools for the implementation of the above paragraphs. Let us use them.

4.- Health Apps, Social Media and Internet are complementary but do not replace an active personal relationship with our patients.
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7.- http://rsna.org/About-Radiology-Cares/


