



Irish Institute of Radiography and Radiation Therapy

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FORENSIC 'NON-ACCIDENTAL INJURY' STUDY DAY

AMNCH, Tallaght provided the venue for a Forensic 'NAI' Study Day on Saturday 3rd September which was funded by the IIRRT/HSE and the 25 attendees received 0.75 IIRRT CPD point.

The aim of the Study Day was to increase awareness amongst Radiographers and Radiation Therapists of the signs and symptoms, as well as the prevalence of non-accidental injury, including the medico-legal aspects for Radiographers and Radiation Therapists involved when imaging 'non-accidental injuries' in both adult and paediatric patients with regards to reporting disclosures or suspicions to the relevant authorities.

The morning session was facilitated by **Sarah Mahon**, Dedicated Officer for Elder Abuse, HSE who introduced Radiographers to Elder Abuse, including the different categories and the indicators to be aware of. She explained the processes involved in the response to an allegation of Elder Abuse, the different interventions that may be appropriate, and the roles and responsibilities of all HSE staff in reporting concerns. She described the Assessment process to evaluate Elder Abuse, and provided an overview of the HSE's Elder Abuse Service. Sarah concluded with a presentation on the statistics from 2008-2010 which show an increase in the number of referrals to the HSE Elder Abuse service, but it is assumed that Elder Abuse is under-reported.

Dr. Emma Curtis, Consultant Paediatrician in AMNCH outlined the importance of the multi-disciplinary approach to the investigation of suspected NAI in children. She described some case studies where diagnostic imaging had been utilised, and showed the contribution that imaging can make to an investigation. She advised that if a Radiographer has a concern regarding the safety of a child (e.g. inappropriate language or behaviour of the parents...) that they should always report their concerns or observations to the referring doctor.

Ashnee Govander, a Senior Radiographer in Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin gave an overview of the radiological approach to NAI, based on guidelines published by the British Society of Paediatric Radiology; the Royal College of Radiologists; Radiological Society of North America. She outlined the projections that should be undertaken, including coned views of each of the ankles to demonstrate metaphyseal fractures. She also mentioned the importance medico-legal aspects of having 2 Radiographers perform imaging of suspected NAI.

Although cut short due to time, **Prof. Marie Cassidy**, the Irish State Pathologist gave a very interesting presentation on "Injury: Accidental or Not?" where she explained that the misdiagnosis of abuse may lead to a miscarriage of justice or the death of



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the victim of abuse. Professor Cassidy merged the theme of injury: accidental or not, in both children and the elderly, by highlighting the impact of allegations of NAI on the family members, describing some specific cases to illustrate.

The final Speaker was **Jonathan McNulty**, Chair of Editorial Committee of IIRRT Forensic Imaging Guidelines (2010). He outlined the importance of Radiographers making contemporaneous notes to document the facts of a forensic case. He showed the Witness Statement template included in the IIRRT Forensic Guidelines, explaining what needs to be recorded, in accordance with Irish and international best practice forensic guidelines. He also referred to the responsibilities of Radiographers as a 'Designated Officer' under the Child Care Act (1991) in reporting any suspicions or concerns regarding child protection. He suggested that any concerns or observations be documented contemporaneously for reference in the future if required.

Feedback from attendees was positive overall with the following suggestions and comments for future Study Days:

Topic for future Forensic Study Days:

- Forensic radiography
- Major Incidents
- Disaster Victim Identification
- NAI Child Abuse
- Making guideline awareness for radiographers in all hospitals
- How to recognise child abuse –more case studies –very interesting
- What type of injuries/findings the pathologist is looking for –if we had information on that, it would help in deciding which x-rays/images would be most useful.
- Types of fractures to look for, particularly with the age of the patient
- Pathology side very interesting
- Legislation within Ireland
- Film viewing
- More detail regarding recognition of abuse & follow-up, as Rad.
- Injury: accidental/not; Elder Abuse; Completing a Witness Statement
- Discussion of imaging Vs post-mortem / different imaging modalities

Suggestions for future Study Days:

- Basic general radiography
- Looking at pathology on abdominal x-rays
- Radiation protection reminders
- IIR guidelines
- Radiation protection update
- Chest & Abdomen imaging
- Radiology technique



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Online Registration:

- Very good x9
- Good x4
- Acceptable x1
- Poor x7
- Very poor x1
- Not answered x2