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Condensed from 15 Years Ago:

Editorial: Teamwork in Cardiovascular Nuclear Medicine

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Both cardiologists and nuclear medicine physicians are involved in the rapidly developing field of cardiovascular nuclear medicine. In July 1978 we sent a questionnaire to the heads of nuclear medicine residency training programs and directors of adult cardiology training programs to assess the type and degree of collaboration in performing these studies.

Sixty-four percent of the 351 questionnaires sent were returned within 2 mo. Only 10% of the returned questionnaires stated that these studies were not performed, and these institutions were excluded from further evaluation. In only six institutions are the studies performed exclusively in the department of cardiology. Most are done either exclusively in nuclear medicine or in both cardiology and nuclear medicine departments.

The most encouraging result of our survey is that cardiologists and nuclear medicine physicians work together as a team. Over 90% of both groups said there was collaboration

between cardiology and nuclear medicine and that they believed the procedures should be performed as a joint effort.

Exercise testing was the area where collaboration was most often cited. The experience and expertise in selecting appropriate patients, performing the proper exercise protocol, and monitoring the patient's response were described as essential roles for the cardiologist. The expertise of the nuclear medicine physician was of greatest value in the technical aspects of the study. In some institutions a separate division of cardiovascular nuclear medicine has been created with the joint appointment of a cardiologist and a nuclear medicine physician, or of one physician trained in both disciplines. Some questionnaires stated that collaboration was primarily in joint research projects; others stated that there was joint interpretation of the studies. Some institutions have joint training programs for cardiology and nuclear medicine residents.

From the results of the questionnaire, we have concluded that cardiologists and nuclear medicine physicians should and do work together. Almost all have found that collaboration is the key to success.

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