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## To New Nuclear Medicine Residents

As a resident in nuclear medicine, you are embarking upon an extraordinary adventure—a career with great intellectual stimulation and excitement and a career with special responsibilities and privileges:

- You are responsible to the patients whose welfare and safety will be entrusted to you.
- You are responsible to the faculty who will train you and the physicians who entrust their patients to you.
- You are responsible to society who entrusts you with the safe handling and utilization of radioactive materials, a privilege not routinely available to those licensed to practice medicine.

Your training will prepare you for these responsibilities. You will learn to handle and to quantify radioactive materials and to use them to perform procedures to clarify a diagnostic or management problem, to select and interpret those procedures, and to treat patients with radioactive material when appropriate.

To practice nuclear medicine, it is necessary to know as much medicine as possible—the clinical, laboratory and radiologic findings of disorders in every special area of medicine, their natural history and pathophysiology, the anatomy of the area involved, the pharmacologic effects of drugs used to treat these disorders and the physiologic effects of other interventions. The nuclear medicine physician must understand the pharmacokinetics and distribution of the radioactive tracer being used and its physical characteristics and biological effects, if any. The nuclear medicine physician must understand the physics and engineering of information acquisition, processing, image production and display. He or she must determine if differences between images are due to technique or differences among patients. The nuclear medicine physician should also be familiar with the special requirements and differences based upon gender and age.

The nuclear medicine physician must do these things with knowledge and wisdom involving efficient utilization of resources which are always expensive and limited, and concern for patients, their privacy and their anxieties.

Welcome to nuclear medicine!

**Stanley J. Goldsmith, MD**  
*Editor-in-Chief, The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*