

SNM General and Hybrid Imaging Guidelines

SNM leadership, including the SNM training task force in collaboration with the American Board of Nuclear Medicine (ABNM), continues to work on educational materials, guidelines, credentialing statements, and position papers regarding competency in nuclear medicine to ensure high-quality care for patients who may benefit from diagnostic and therapeutic procedures with radiopharmaceuticals. The SNM Board of Directors published a Newsline article on “Competency in Nuclear Medicine” in the October issue of *JNM* (1). The ABNM Position Statement on Nuclear Medicine Professional Competency and Scope of Practice will be published in *JNM* before the end of the year (2).

SNM cannot control the shortage of radioisotopes, decreasing reimbursement, and the economic situation in the United States that has led to a serious problem of job availability in nuclear medicine. These issues continue to be high priorities for SNM, and all efforts are being made to support initiatives that will provide a more reliable supply of radioisotopes (including a domestic supply), maintain reimbursement, and improve the job market. In addition, SNM is working on an online job bank and Web site to facilitate communications.

The SNM guidelines on general imaging (available on the SNM Web site) include section V on qualifications of physicians (3):

All Nuclear Medicine examinations should be performed under the supervision of and interpreted by a physician certified in Nuclear Medicine or Nuclear Radiology by the American Board of Nuclear Medicine, the American Board of Radiology, the Royal College of Physicians or Surgeons of Canada, Le College des Medecins du Quebec, or the equivalent. In addition, the physician should participate in maintenance of certification in the field of nuclear medicine.

The American College of Radiology (ACR)–SNM technical standard for procedures using radiopharmaceuticals is also in the process of being revised. The tentative language in the section of qualification of personnel is the following:

The physician providing nuclear medicine services must meet all of the following criteria: 1. Certification in Radiology, Diagnostic Radiology, Nuclear Radiology, or Nuclear Medicine by one of the following organizations: the American Board of Radiology, the American Board of Nuclear Medicine, the American Osteopathic Board of Radiology, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, Le College des Medecins du Quebec, and/or the American Osteopathic Board of Nuclear Medicine. In addition, the physician should have appropriate training and experience in specific examinations or therapy, as defined in procedure specific guidelines when applicable. *Or* At a minimum, completion of a formal Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education approved nuclear medicine program or an American Osteopathic Association approved nuclear medicine program that must meet all NRC requirements as cited in 10 CFR 35.290(c)(1)(i). In addition, clinical training in nuclear medicine is required which must cover technical performance, calculation of administered activity, evaluation of images, correlation with other diagnostic modalities, interpretation, and formal reporting. Physicians trained prior to the availability of formal instruction in nuclear medicine-related sciences may be exempted from this paragraph, provided they have been actively involved in providing nuclear medicine services; *and* 2. Have documented regular participation in continuing medical education (CME) related to procedures using radiopharmaceuticals, in accordance with the ACR Practice Guideline for Continuing Medical Education. In addition, expertise should be maintained on a continual basis to ensure the quality and safety of patient care through ongoing experience as defined in procedure specific guidelines and maintenance of certification as appropriate.

Training recommendations for hybrid imaging PET/CT and SPECT/CT are described in an SNM/ACR/Society of Computed Body Tomography and Magnetic Resonance position statement (4,5) and in both the SNM Procedure Guideline for Tumor Imaging with ¹⁸F-FDG PET/CT (6) and the ACR practice guidelines for performing ¹⁸F-FDG PET/CT in oncology (7). Educational modules with PET/CT (3 modules of 50 cases each) and CT cases (3 modules of 50 cases each) are available on the SNM Web site for continuing education (8). SNM provides a Certificate of Qualification to Perform, Supervise, and Interpret PET/CT and SPECT/CT, and application forms for continuing education summary and case experience. In addition, SNM has credentialing statements regarding hybrid imaging and therapy (9–13).

The ABNM Maintenance of Certification examination is available yearly, and the successful diplomate receives a certificate and a letter documenting that this comprehensive examination covers the following areas: general nuclear medicine, cardiovascular nuclear medicine including stress testing, CT including contrast-enhanced CT, PET/CT, SPECT/CT, molecular imaging, and therapy with radioactive sources.

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