

Demonstrating the Value of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging

As a reader of this journal, you recognize the utility of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging for diagnosing, evaluating, and treating disease. For many referring physicians and patients, however, the value may not be as apparent. The Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging (SNMMI) has made it a priority to expand its outreach to referring physicians and patients, and, over the past year, we have made very substantial progress in finding new ways to disseminate our message. We have made significant progress in this regard through grant support that the society has been fortunate enough to receive.

Through a grant from the Eli Lilly Foundation, SNMMI has engaged in education and outreach efforts to advance amyloid imaging. Several education sessions and seminars were held at the society's Mid-Winter and Annual meetings. A series of webinars and 2 Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment programs were developed to educate health professionals about performing amyloid imaging and interpreting and reporting on the studies. SNMMI attended the 2012 Alzheimer's Association International Conference and presented on the structure and purpose of the SNMMI/Alzheimer's Association Amyloid Imaging Task Force. SNMMI has also joined with the Alzheimer's Association to sponsor a track titled "Aging/Dementia/Degenerative Disease" at the 2013 American Academy of Neurology's Annual Meeting in March.

SNMMI has also created a multifaceted outreach program that utilizes a variety of tools and methods to reach the imaging community, referring physicians, patients, consumer groups, and regulators/legislators about the value of radioisotope therapy. A grant to SNMMI from Bayer Healthcare has allowed the society to enhance existing relationships and develop new partnerships with relevant societies and patient organizations. SNMMI is developing a fact sheet on ^{223}Ra and a webinar on molecular imaging and therapy for prostate cancer. A radioisotope therapy microsite was recently completed (www.snmmi.org/RIT). In addition, a comprehensive education program has been developed for health care professionals to increase their knowledge of radioisotope therapy agents.

In March, SNMMI will join with the National Cancer Institute to host a 2-day workshop on targeted radionuclide therapy. Sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, the workshop will stimulate discussion on current and potential

applications of targeted radionuclide therapy for the treatment of hematologic and solid cancers. The program includes didactic lectures, panel discussions, and breakout sessions on the first day, followed by a summary of key findings on the second day.

SNMMI was also awarded a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. The grant aims to address the substantial gap in oncology care delivery resulting from treating physicians' suboptimal knowledge about advanced imaging alternatives. The project will target referring physicians and other medical trainees involved with the care of oncology patients, specifically those with head and neck cancers. The 3-year grant will allow SNMMI to develop novel dissemination platforms and applications using electronic media, video and Internet mechanisms, and multiple interactive technologies to engage those oncology providers who are most likely to order advanced diagnostic imaging tests during their treatment of patients.

In addition, SNMMI has applied for a grant from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute that would develop oncology-focused dissemination and communication tools for patients and providers through enhancing and expanding current infrastructure and ongoing initiatives in comparative effectiveness research in molecular imaging. One of the major areas of focus would be to improve the understanding of patients and providers of radioimmunotherapy in lymphoma, as well as educating both groups about the appropriate use of PET in lymphoma. This grant would have the potential to be funded for 3 years.

Each of these initiatives would not have been possible without the support of industry and governmental agencies, as well as the guidance of our members. As we continue our work with each of these grants and other outreach initiatives, we will keep SNMMI members updated on the progress. We look forward to sharing the results with you.



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