

Quality, Innovation, and Recognition: Themes for the Year Ahead

Hossein Jadvar, MD, PhD, MPH, MBA, SNMMI President

I am deeply honored to serve as SNMMI's president in the year ahead. The society's annual meeting in Baltimore was a great success—a chance to share research, brainstorm, discuss our vision for the future of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging, and set goals.

My sincere thanks go to Dr. Peter Herscovitch for his excellent leadership of the society this past year. Under his guidance, SNMMI established the Department of Evidence and Quality and started the process of developing evidence-based appropriate use criteria (AUC) that will serve as clinical decision support tools—helping physicians who order advanced diagnostic imaging. In the coming year, we will be adding more AUC. This is an expensive, time-consuming undertaking, but it is one we consider essential to excellent patient care. The quality and safety of patient care is our top priority. In addition, SNMMI is working with other professional organizations on collaborative standards, which will help identify the elements of each procedure that are most important in obtaining a high-quality examination while controlling costs and limiting patient exposure to radiation.

We also need to continue working on quantifying quality. SNMMI encourages and facilitates member participation in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Physician Quality Reporting System. We want physicians and other care providers to be rewarded for providing the highest possible quality of care—not rewarded solely for providing more care. This means meeting and, in some cases, exceeding performance standards set by public and private payers. When quantity is the only requirement for payment, incentives are skewed, setting costs spiraling out of control and wreaking havoc in our health care system. The development of AUC will help establish standards—greatly benefiting patients and eventually leading to guidelines for proper reimbursement for care provided.

To advance the field of nuclear medicine, we need a renewed focus on education and outreach to patients, physicians, and the general public to demonstrate the competitive advantage and unique benefits of nuclear medicine. Comparative effectiveness evidence studies can make the case. An informed public and fair reimbursement will help increase the availability and appropriate use of nuclear medicine procedures today and will support the development of new radiopharmaceuticals and technologies in the future.

The research presented at the SNMMI Annual Meeting is impressive and shows the promise that lies ahead in the field of molecular imaging. Researchers are developing new radiopharmaceuticals that can have a significant impact on

improving human health. However, in today's health care environment, it is often difficult to utilize these technologies to their highest potential because of regulatory and reimbursement issues. Ensuring rapid approval and adequate and appropriate reimbursement for nuclear medicine and molecular imaging procedures is one of my top priorities for the next year.

An ongoing concern is the fragile pipeline that supplies the radionuclides so essential to nuclear medicine. For example, we still have no domestic production of ^{99m}Tc for $^{99\text{m}}\text{Tc}$; instead, we rely on aging nuclear facilities in other countries. I look forward to working closely with the Nuclear Medicine Global Initiative project to address the issue of access and availability of radiopharmaceuticals.

I am especially excited to tell you about our plans for the new Therapy Center of Excellence, which will help ensure that SNMMI is a leader in radionuclide therapy. The new center will bring together the core competency of a multidisciplinary interest group of experts in targeted radionuclide therapy. The center will assist in development of emerging agents, provide advocacy for regulatory approval and reimbursement of emerging agents, and advance the use of approved agents. It will accomplish these goals through in-person courses, symposia, meeting sessions, and workshops.

We have entered the frontier of personalized and precision medicine, and we are the pioneers. I cannot imagine a more exciting time to be in the nuclear medicine field. As president of SNMMI, I look forward to working with our members, as well as government agencies and other organizations around the globe, to ensure:

- Encouragement and support of research and innovation;
- Development and application of quality and safety guidelines;
- Establishment of a reliable supply of radionuclides; and
- Systems that appropriately reward excellence.

We have much to accomplish, and I will need your help. I thank you in advance for working with me to realize SNMMI's objectives and the potential that nuclear medicine and molecular imaging have to greatly improve patient care and outcomes.



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