ACR Informatics Commission survey uncovers IT savvy radiologists ready to adopt care-enabling technology

By G. Rebecca Haines, CAE, Senior Director, ACR Press, and Christoph Wald, MD, PhD, FACR, Professor of Radiology, Tufts University Medical School, Boston, MA

Although the debate about the benefits of standardization and the application of automated processes has long been retired in many industries, controversy still persists in medicine. Detractors opine, often loudly, on the lost "art" of medicine and potential commoditization of physician work ignoring years of evidence proving the benefits of standardized care processes.

Radiologists have been early adopters of systems and technology tools that streamline the patient care process within their own domain, yet the overall community of practitioners is not monolithic in its acceptance and adoption of advanced tools like structured reporting, computer-assisted diagnosis, and systems integrations. The ACR has provided the Informatics Resource Center in the *Journal of the American College of Radiology* and articles such as The Imaging 3.0 Informatics Scorecard for the practicing radiologist to use in their current work. But radiologists are not typically comfortable with the technology status quo and health care IT is advancing rapidly. An open microphone discussion planned at ACR 2015: "Improving the IQ of What We Do," will inform future ACR technology efforts. As a prelude to the May 2015 session and to better understand the technology pulse of the radiology profession, the ACR Informatics Commission undertook a short survey in early April. The survey sought to uncover radiologists' interest in and adoption of key care-enabling technology such as point-of-care evidence-based guidelines, standard reporting templates, and multimedia report components. A response rate of 10% indicated the high level of interest in this topic among ACR member radiologists of all ages and practice settings.

The results demonstrate that the majority of respondents are anxious to implement supportive technology if it were available. For example, 78% of respondents would like to use evidence-based guidelines embedded in their clinical workflow. This bodes well for clinical decision support at order entry as well as radiologist decision support (assisted reporting) adoption and implementations. The survey revealed a gap between willingness to use the more advanced reporting standards and their imminent availability. Sixty-five percent of respondents indicate a willingness to spend extra time to create multimedia reports if the information and technology permitted this, but 71% thought it would take several years to get to that point, didn't know when it would happen, or thought it might never happen. Furthermore, resistance to change did not seem to be an uphill battle for this demographically heterogeneous group, more than

half of whom said they would use more integrated patient data as well as create structured reports if it were part of their workflow.

The ACR's Informatics Commission is committed to supporting patient-centered care redesign using technology that standardizes and improves the accuracy of information shared with caregivers and their patients. According to Commission Chair, Keith Dreyer, DO, PhD, "Radiologists are well-positioned to not only adopt technology in their workflows to improve patient outcomes under their control, but they are the ideal leaders to support image and information sharing across the care process to enhance coordinated care that delivers greater value to patients and the system. We've moved beyond the point of just talking about this type of technology transformation to actually making it happen in radiology departments, clinics, and practices. Now we know that our members are ready, willing, and able to adopt and implement outcomes-changing informatics tools that we've been developing at ACR in partnership with HIT vendor partners. The Informatics Commission is hard at work to provide the education and guidance to support their widespread application."

Editor's Note: This article was written specifically for the Informatics Resource Center as well as to provide context for attendees of the open mic session at ACR 2015. For more information, visit the Informatics Resource Center at http://informatics.jacr.org.