

Transforming Oral and Maxillofacial Radiologist to Diagnostic and Interventional Imageologist

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We as an oral and maxillofacial radiologists owe enormous gratitude and sincere appreciation to Sir Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen for empowering Oral Medicine and Radiology experts with the magic of radiation to “diagnose the undiagnosed, to see the unseen, to explore the unexplored, to expose the unexposed, to expect the unexpected and finally made Impossible to Possible”.

It is not the time to equate with the bygone but to know further about the future prospects as in no time we specialists transformed as a diagnostic specialists. In existence transformation is a process and journey of discovery - there are moments on mountaintops and moments in deep valleys of despair. Within a matter of time we travelled from “Conventional to Digital, 2D to 3D, Normal to Real time effect, Unfunctional to Functional Imaging”. Now it’s time to arise as an interventional imageologist and stand out with excellence, confidence and expertise to be equivalent with the medical radiologists, for the patients with the need of intervention in oral and maxillofacial region.

A well trained and skilled radiologist will do methodical analysis of slices of the images and briefs the findings and provides a valid radiographic impression. Even in the dental scenario the available infrastructure may support for only intra and extra oral imaging with conventional and digital modalities. So there are wider area of opportunities which has made its way into the field of oral medicine and radiology. Hence the current and the upcoming generations of oral radiologists need to augment on to their existing skills and knowledge in the newer technical and biological perspectives and be proactive in radio-diagnosis.

In medicine no other field is evolving as rapidly at present as radiology/imageology. Advances have elevated diagnostic imaging to the level of therapeutic purpose; as well it maintains its role in integrating the various disciplines of medical care. As well the radiologist must be a competent generalist prior to any specialization for both diagnostic as well as therapeutic (interventional radiology) purpose for managements of several diseases. Interventional radiology became so popular that, used with minimum invasively to treat several diseases and can be done by using highly available precision gadgets allow entry to surgically inaccessible areas.

Technology has grown leaps and bounds, transforming diagnostic imaging into a sophisticated science with ever-broadening clinical applications. Interventional radiology has added a whole new dimension and scope to medical practice itself, substantially altering the treatment options for several ailments. All this has put the concept and role of clinical imaging into a different perspective with growing relevance.

Interventional radiology is a strong science and analytical foundation to be made applicable for oral radiology patients by using sophisticated 3D technologies and advanced ways of manufacturing computer designed objects which includes fused deposition modelling: Forensic facial reconstruction, Image guided radiotherapy, Mini implant placement for anchorage in ortho cases, Surgical stent fabrication for implants, Stereolithography, Sialography, TMJ arthroscopy, Arthrocentesis or joint aspirations, image guided puncture technique of the TMJ for disk adhesion, CT, MRI and USG guided biopsy in orofacial region, Fused PET/CT image for the staging evaluation of patients with oral Cancer, CBCT in orthognathic surgery patients, Bone biopsy, Botox in tension headaches, salivary glands and muscles of mastication.

Interventional maxillofacial radiology is considered as the offspring of medical interventional radiology. It is a minimally invasive approach with high diagnostic yield. It has no morbidity or mortality and involves shortened hospital stays. This subspecialty consists of both diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.

Finally to conclude the key revolution should arise within us in the current scenario to reinforce the roots and to bring a revolution in the field of stagnant oral and maxillofacial Radiology to guide other specialty for patients care and attention.

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