



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Finding Meaningful Opportunities During the COVID-19 Crisis: Developing an International Radiology Elective in Cameroon

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Abstract

Teleradiology and remote video conferences can provide radiology residents the opportunity to participate in global radiology outreach. We reflect on how social distancing measures and remote education resources developed to address COVID-19 were applied to developing an international radiology elective.

When radiology residencies across the country began decreasing volume and staffing in response to the COVID-19 crisis, many residents found themselves spending more time away from the hospital than ever before. To comply with new health and safety regulations, our residency program transitioned to remote learning and self-study. We struggled to keep a sense of normalcy and sought new opportunities to do meaningful work. One such opportunity came from a member of our RadAID chapter, who had developed a relationship with a hospital in rural Northwest Cameroon, and who then opened the program to residents with the approval of the local radiology team in Cameroon. With a new abundance of time and a renewed sense of purpose, residents volunteered, the elective was formalized, and we began our work with Mbingo Baptist Hospital.

Radiology infrastructure in Cameroon is limited outside of its two largest cities. Mbingo Baptist Hospital imaging center houses one of the few CT scanners outside Douala and Yaounde (1,2). The Cameroon radiology team taught residents the value of imaging in a low-resource region and the role it plays in patient care. CT exams were typically problem-directed and only performed after extensive workup, leading to a very high proportion of complex, positive exams and providing an opportunity for collaboration with our remote team. In addition to providing feedback on published reports and interpreting studies independently, residents participated in and led biweekly case conferences, allowing them to discuss search patterns and interpret subtle, important findings. Additionally, residents shared relevant educational resources relevant to the session's cases in the form of free or open access radiology articles. At the end of the elective, residents led a noon conference, sharing interesting cases from the month and

discussing how imaging protocols at a rural, low-resource hospital were catered to the needs of their hospital and patient population.

Isolation and social distancing have made the need for developing our telehealth infrastructure more obvious than ever. Opportunities like our partnership with the radiology team in Cameroon can be adopted by residency programs across the country (3,4). Sharing educational and training resources, experiencing how radiology is practiced in areas of varying resources, and fostering an environment for international radiology outreach is beneficial to residents in the United States and host programs abroad.

Conflicts of interest

The authors report no conflicts of interest.

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