

Statement on Clinician Well-Being from the International Society for Strategic Studies in Radiology

The International Society for Strategic Studies in Radiology (IS3R) is comprised of leaders from around the world, including chairpersons of renowned academic departments and senior investigators in imaging research. Working together with its corporate members and with national and multi-national radiological societies and organizations, it attempts to shape the future of medical imaging and image-guided therapies by leveraging the knowledge and influence of world leaders in these disciplines and in related industries.

The global reach of the IS3R provides a somewhat unique perspective on physician well-being and burnout: namely, that burnout is an increasing problem for radiologists globally, independent of health care system, or nationality. With regard to the frequency of physician burnout, radiology has ranked in the top quartile among physician specialties in both the US and the UK for nearly a decade.

In addition to the commonly cited causes of burnout, such as increased regulatory and administrative burdens, radiology has some that are relatively unique. The pace of technological development and implementation has been particularly rapid in medical imaging and has steadily increased the complexity of acquiring, processing, and reading medical images. Along with the growth and continuous development of computer-based imaging modalities, the use of online communications and image storage and display options, and the high-speed imaging acquisition techniques available for many imaging modalities, have produced many potential sources of stress, including greater demand for imaging, the need to analyze more images per patient, long periods in front of computer monitors, increasing repetitive-use injury, and increasing isolation from patients and referring clinicians. Moreover, growing demand not simply for imaging but for rapid, 24/7 service, and an imbalance between the demand for services and the available workforce (also found in other specialties with high burnout rates), have further increased the number of hours radiologists work, including on night-time and weekend call. In turn, the long hours have increased radiologists' sense of isolation and lessened their control over their professional lives.

What we are doing:

- 1) We are working with industry and academia to foster growth of technological responses to better manage workload and ergonomic issues (e.g., AI applications for performing repetitive observational tasks).
- 2) We are working globally to better understand and suggest the consideration of flexible hours to balance the needs for efficiency and ergonomics imposed by high technology
- 3) We are working with our members, including representatives of professional societies, to summarize and disseminate educational programs and other initiatives to address the core issues that lead to burnout.