

PRESS RELEASE

HERCA launches a European communication campaign to promote the appropriate use of medical imaging.

On the International Day of Radiology the 8th of November 2019, a European communication campaign "Getting the right image for my patient" will be launched in 19 countries. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness on the appropriate use of medical radiological examinations.

This campaign is addressed to medical doctors across Europe who request radiological examinations for their patients in their daily practice. Radiological examinations have proven to be very effective for diagnosis and treatment in modern medicine. However, they expose the patient to ionising radiation that may cause a health detriment.

In principle, a medical radiological examination should be of benefit for the patient. However, a number of studies in European countries have shown that a considerable number of radiological examinations are not necessary and therefore of no benefit for the patients. For this reason HERCA organised in 2016 a European "action week" focused on the inspection of the appropriateness of radiological examinations in radiology departments. The conclusions from this "action week" highlighted the need to increase the awareness among professionals on the appropriate use of medical imaging.

The basic campaign material is a set of seven key questions for the medical doctors when requesting a radiological examination. The aim of the questions is to increase the awareness of the medical doctors on available tools and provide knowledge which can help either to effectively choose the appropriate radiological examination for the patient or to choose an alternative way forward. The questions also help them to communicate with the patient when a radiological examination is concerned. The benefits for the patient will be: getting the right diagnosis with the right examination, starting the right treatment without delay and avoiding any unnecessary examinations that will be of no benefit.

The individual national campaigns are adapted to national needs, while building on the common basic material developed by HERCA. The common material as well as links to national campaign pages can be found on the HERCA website (www.herca.org).

It is HERCA's hope that raising awareness for the proper use of medical radiological examinations will not only lead to improved radiation protection, but also contribute to an overall improvement of health care in its member states.

Contact:

** HERCA is a voluntary association in which the Heads of European Radiation protection Competent Authorities work together in order to identify common issues and propose practical solutions for these issues. Its current fields of activity include, amongst others, medical and veterinary applications of ionizing radiation, radiological emergency preparedness and response, radon and naturally occurring radioactive materials. The program of work of HERCA is based on common interest in significant regulatory issues. HERCA currently brings together 56 radiation protection authorities from 32 European countries. These authorities develop national legal frameworks for the safe use of ionizing radiation and conduct inspections to ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.*