

Nuclear medicine technologists' education and training: Where are we...and where do we intend to go?

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Abstract

Objectives This work aims to promote Critical Thinking and to sustain discussion about distinct methods and options for Education and Training of Nuclear Medicine Technologists.

Methods Data and experience from several European countries distinct approaches is presented and compared in order to allow evaluating its potential impact in the theoretical knowledge and practical competences acquired, so as well in the responsibility, autonomy and technical level of performance expectable.

Results Nuclear Medicine is an independent medical specialty for almost fifty years. Its distinct origin, evolution and dynamic of development are clear justification for specialization between the distinct health professionals involved. Nevertheless, in some countries there is one exception: the Technologists. Their education differs from country to country and it might vary from strictly Professional to a Superior Degree level within the European Union, as well as between a Multispecialty approach (which received a "wide band" education and training, the same used for Radiology and Radiotherapy Technologists) and a Dedicated Specialty approach.

Conclusions According with those facts, concepts as "Basic" and "Advanced" Practice becomes entirely meaningless, while some "Post-Graduated" Courses in some countries present a level clearly inferior to some "Undergraduate" Courses from other countries, causing that some Graduates are more competent and best performers than some Post-

Graduates. Also, nationally, specialties that should be parallel are benefiting from much higher attention during the Education and Training process than others, resulting that Health Professionals theoretically – and legally! – equivalent are in fact very different and perform with very distinct levels of competences, autonomy and responsibility. We are convicts that those facts needs to be clarified and highlighted adequately, to be clearly assumed – ...or not! – for the Society and the remaining Health Professionals with whom we share our daily activities.