

Nuclear Medicine Technologists Basic & Advanced Practice: What Does it Really Means?

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Introduction: Nuclear Medicine is an independent medical specialty for almost fifty years. It is quite clear and widely accepted, being in the basis and the justification for specialization between the distinct professionals involved, in many countries there is one exception: the Technologists. Since, in some countries, Nuclear Medicine is part of Medical Imaging area (which could include different specialties such as Radiology or Ultrasonography and, in a more restricted number of countries, even Radiotherapy), the “versatility” of Technologists might be somehow appreciated by some of the parts involved. Nevertheless, there are critical issues that need to be addressed - like the ability and capacity to perform distinct Practices at a certain level of autonomy and responsibility - and the final positions might be very distinct from one to another country.

Aims: This work aims to compare data and experience related to Nuclear Medicine Technologists Education and Training in distinct European countries and to evaluate its potential impact in the practical competences acquired, so in the technical performance, aiming to promote critical thinking and well-based discussion about this controversial issue.

Discussion: Nuclear Medicine Education differs from country to country, and it could vary from a strictly Professional to a Superior Degree level in European Union, as well as between a multispecialty approach and a dedicated specialty approach. But even in the Superior Degree level, there is a huge difference in the total contact hours with the specialty by the students: for example it could be so different as from a very short number of classes plus 1 week internship (as some institutions at UK), to 12 hours of theory plus 12 hours of practical classes (some institutions in Belgium) or 100 hours in total (Poland), all of them organized on a 3-Years Multispecialty Courses, to a total of 3.300 hours (2.100 theoretical/practical + 1.200 internship) during a 4-Years Dedicated Course (Portugal).

Considering this, it is not surprising that what it is considered as “Basic Practice” in some countries becomes easily “Advanced Practices” in another, while in some Post-Graduated Courses, the level might easily be inferior to some Undergraduate Courses from other countries, resulting that some Graduates are more competent and performing better than

some Post-Graduates. On other hand, either, other specialties, like Radiology, are benefiting from a far much higher attention during Education and Training, making that Health Professionals theoretically – and legally! – equivalent are in fact very different.

Foi decidido que não será apresentada a versão integral deste documento.

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