

Red Flags in Radiology

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All radiological departments should aspire to a high quality of radiological services at the lowest possible risk to the patient. It is important to address their potential areas of weakness in advance and also try to reduce the sources of errors as far as possible. A proactive approach to risk management involving a structured way to reduce risk to patients and staff to the lowest achievable level is required. The key to risk management is a willingness to evaluate all actions with transparency and openness and to try to remedy obvious failures where appropriate. We must try to reduce risk as much as possible, recognizing that medical cases are a balance of risk and benefit. If both radiologists and patients are fully aware of these risks, the resulting expectations will be realistic.

The proper departmental protocol should be in place for all investigations so that potential complications are identified before the investigation and all attempts are made to eliminate or when not possible alleviate them. The procedure should be reviewed and complications should be audited. Individual radiologists may consider keeping a database of all patients on whom they have performed procedures, any adverse events and overall outcomes. The essence of risk management is to review all potential reasons for an inaccurate report in advance.