

Low Compliance with X-ray Imaging Procedures

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Inspections performed by the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority (SSM) showed that radiographers do not always apply standard procedures and policies for reducing the radiation dose to patients. Nor did hospital management evaluate compliance with these procedures.

In 2012, 199 radiology departments in Sweden were requested by SSM to report on existing guidelines regarding identity checks, X-ray examinations of women of childbearing age, when to use lead shielding of gonads for male patients and when to use compression. Thirteen radiology departments lacked guidelines and were requested to establish them.

Over the course of 2013 and 2014, SSM conducted a follow-up to the 2012 survey of existing guidelines for reducing the radiation dose to patients. Heads of staff at 94 radiology departments were requested to evaluate their compliance with existing guidelines for reducing radiation doses to patients.

The procedures examined were:

- ID verification
- Asking women of childbearing age about possible pregnancy
- Use of lead shielding of gonads
- Use of compression

When comparing the two periods 2013 and 2014, SSM has noted that the radiology departments have increased their ability to produce required data for a certain period regarding use of basic radiation protection guidelines. For the period in 2013, only 33 per cent of the participating radiological departments were able to produce required data. For the period in 2014, 93 per cent of the radiology departments were able to produce required data. This should indicate that the radiology departments now have the ability to evaluate their compliance with basic radiation protection guidelines.

Despite this improvement, compliance with basic radiation protection guidelines is still low, around 50 per cent, indicating that there is great potential for improvement. The spread is wide and several radiology departments, in both public and private healthcare, have 100 per cent compliance with guidelines.

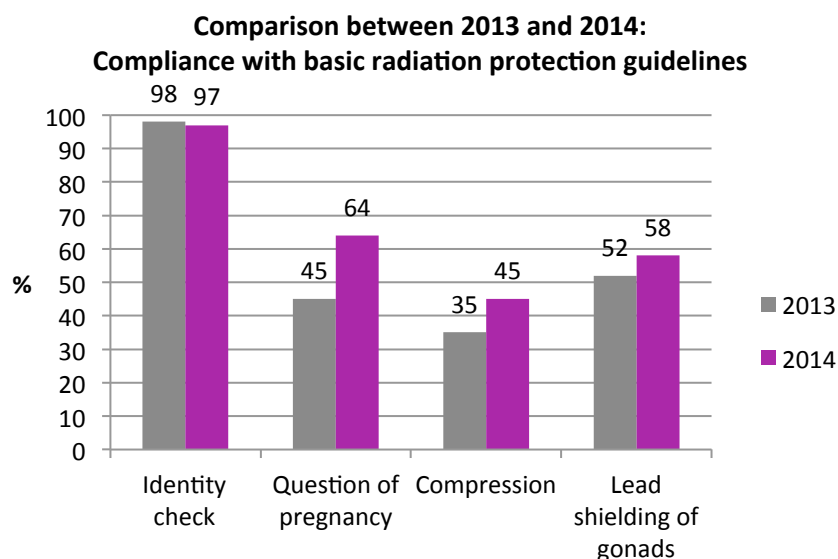
Over the course of 2015, the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority plans to continue its regulatory focus on the area of practical radiation protection work at national radiology departments.

Background

In May 2012, the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority distributed a questionnaire to all radiology departments in Sweden, totalling 199 departments. The supervisors were urged to account for their procedural compliance in the areas of ID checks, when examining women of childbearing age, use of gonad protection and use of compression.

In 2013 and 2014, 94 of these radiology departments were requested to report on their compliance with basic radiation protection guidelines to SSM by filling out an Internet form:

- The number of examinations in which the procedures were complied with.
- The number of examinations in which the procedures should have been complied with.



Average values for all radiology departments in Sweden when comparing 2013 and 2014.