

Connected Patients in Light of Big Data

THE JOURNAL 2022

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Medical Imaging



How to Reach Gold Standards in Radiology Through Continuous Learning & Education - Affidea Case Study

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Rapid developments in radiology and technological advances offer unique educational opportunities that can set the clinical standards for better patient outcomes. Affidea is committed to providing clinical teams with the necessary education and tools to lead the future of radiology.



Key Points

- Radiology has a pivotal and decisive role in patient management.
- Affidea empowers its clinical community with a strong professional development plan for a triple-win situation: for patients, doctors and the company.
- Continuous medical education is the only way to provide safe, effective, and high-quality, specialised patient care.
- The educational plan at Affidea includes local and corporate initiatives and multidisciplinary meetings where radiologists and clinicians learn together.

Radiology is the core business of Affidea and the medical specialty, probably most sensitive to the ever-evolving nature of medicine. This is, in great part, related to the new technologies and methodologies used in radiology, and it is unquestionably important to keep updated on the most recent developments.

Radiology has a pivotal and decisive role in patient management. Clinicians rely on our diagnostic performance to make the most effective treatment decisions and achieve the best patient outcomes. By supporting education, Affidea empowers its clinical community with the necessary skills in the long run; a strong professional development plan that turns into a triple-win: for patients, doctors and the company.

In the last studies dedicated to healthcare management, including the one led by Healthmanagement.org, CEOs from the healthcare sector considered the availability of skilled staff to be one of their five top concerns. Continuous medical

education is an absolute need and not just a nice-to-have. It is the only way to provide safe, effective, and high-quality, specialised patient care.

Inward and Outward Benefits of Continuous Medical Education

Inward benefits reflect upon expanding knowledge and skills in sub-specialty areas, updating and uniforming standards of clinical procedures, replicating best practices and innovative projects across centres, and supporting clinical talent recruitment and retention processes.

The outward benefits include our strong reputation of clinical excellence and strengthened relationships with referrals and patients, health sector third parties and key opinion leaders (KOLs).

Affidea has committed to building up a consistent clinical team organised by subspecialty groups and a strong network of



medical directors across 15 countries, with excellence-driven and educational-conscious experts and researchers and close connections with the most relevant scientific societies who are willing to share their expertise.

Sapere aude As Our Clinical Motto

This is to say that the investment in continuous professional development is Affidea's hallmark. For this, Affidea relies on a team fully dedicated to scientific education to set a consistent medical education programme tailored to our healthcare professionals' needs, preparing them for the road ahead.

The **Affidea Academy** was the starting point for all educational projects, and we are proud to say it has been progressively expanding.

The rationale is the never-ending need to upgrade scientific knowledge, which is the essence of excellence in clinical performance. Specifically, the project focuses on:

- establishing a virtual clinical onboarding, as well as professional development programmes;
- further developing subspecialty-related content to drive DI & Clinical Service Excellence;
- implementing and promoting the Affidea Clinical Academy and Clinical Knowledge Hub as in-house learning solutions;
- designing & delivering a series of scientific events for internal and external audiences to focus on new screening programmes, modalities and innovative products to support growth.

We believe that a communication-centred approach between the Education & Learning Team and the Clinical Community is a key to success.

Profiling the Clinical Needs for Tailor-Made Education

Progress comes through active listening to the needs of our doctors and through close communication. With this in mind, we profiled our clinical team through targeted surveys which provided us deep insight into their clinical needs and expectations while keeping an open channel of communication. Other factors have been considered, such as the specifics of

each centre, epidemiologic data and technological solutions, with a special focus on opportunities for improvement and the most recent innovations. This is how we managed to build a tailor-made educational agenda that meets the needs of our clinical team and responds to the current challenges.

Different formats of educational events, such as webinars, hot topics, courses, and conferences, both live and on-demand, are provided.

The recently created Affidea Knowledge Hub, a digital environment that includes all clinical resources, is another valuable asset expected to prompt access to all scientific content developed by Affidea.

The educational plan at Affidea includes local and corporate initiatives, with preference given to multidisciplinary meetings, where radiologists and clinicians can learn together about a specific topic in their area of expertise, including radiotherapy, at 360°. All these projects have the added value of enhancing and standardising best practices and thus raising the bar under the scope of reaching gold clinical standards in all Affidea countries.

The feedback is highly rewarding. Following our most recent scientific events, we have achieved an NPS of 75%, and 95% of the participants mentioned that the learning from the courses provided would be included in their daily clinical practices.

Affidea has a strong legacy in partnering with national and European Scientific Societies, with regular participation in national and European-wide conferences. The most recent and outstanding achievement is the example of the Affidea Hungary Team, which has been accredited to become a training centre for specialists in a state-funded framework, strong evidence of the quality of the centres and the trust that doctors and national authorities offer them.

In conclusion, the rapid developments in radiology and the new advances in technology provide us with unique educational opportunities which are meant to set the clinical standards for better patient outcomes. It is up to us to provide our clinical teams with the necessary education and tools to lead the future of radiology with clinical excellence at the core. ■



developments and get better prepared to mitigate their impact.

Formal rules (laws, regulations, etc.) together with informal rules (coordination tables, joint planning, codes of conduct and self-regulation) derived from the principles of governance of the public management are an important source of support but are simply fulfilling their bureaucratic goals.

Type of Public Managers to Achieve Recovery in Difficult Times

Public managers have common characteristics, even when working in different areas, some more specific to their sector. At a [round table talk of Forum PA](#), Dr Angelo Tanese, head of the Healthcare Public Agency n.1 of the Metropolitan Rome area, stressed the need for healthcare public management to take a leap from the present performance. The public manager has to lead this path, having the consciousness to be the connecting link between the political level that provides the roadmap, goals and financial related means and the aggregate of people, and the material and immaterial instruments that enable the realisation of the outlined programmes. The round table included contributions from other participants from different levels: national, regional, municipal, and the Institute for national statistics.

What was brought home from this discussion and direct conversations with others exercising the public manager's role in healthcare and other sectors? Let's summarise the ones that appear to be the most important requirements, especially for managing the current recovery and moving towards the "new normal" in this historical period, in which it is wise to assume the permanence (for how long?) of the present multiple problems:

- Sense of responsibility and, in parallel, demand some decision-making power.
- Vision and perspective longer than we are used to at present.
- Clear and transparent plans and the flexibility to make changes in case of sudden and unexpected events.
- Maximum attention to new technologies, considering that they are tools and to know them to ensure correct use and maximise their usefulness (e.g. the digitisation of healthcare).

Some personal characteristics appear to be important, not to say essential:

- Capacity to exercise daily leadership, showing positive motivation, inducing the same attitude in personnel at any level.
- Ability to exchange data.

- Collaborating transversely, that is, with people of other disciplines.

These are the essential factors for innovation:

- Planning with longer-term vision.
- Precision with flexibility and preparedness to unpredicted events.
- Acquisition of complexity tools and use of system analysis methodology.
- Speeding up digital transition and telemedicine.
- From hospital to the territory: the opening of the silos.
- Continuity of care: home as the centre of care.
- Participation in changes in the urban environment, seen as common ground with city policymakers for prevention.
- Ecologic transition: the awareness of the great contribution that healthcare should give.

Conclusion

Even if not as publicised as the events concerning the physical aspects of the health facilities, there is, at least among the professional insider's reflection about the necessary, important and urgent changes in public healthcare management, as well as in general, all the segments of public management and consequently, the fundamental figure of the public manager.

The same managers express the importance of the feeling of community inside and among public services, the need to increase the trust in public administration and public services and engaging themselves for a better quality of public activity. They conclude that all this is necessary, the fundamental remaining the capacity to interact and work on the same bases.

No manager succeeds alone. From the above-reported roundtable, an initiative was launched to build a cross-sectoral network of public managers, a platform at present for Italy, then scalable to Europe and involving the private sector.

Back to the questions posed in this article, we can say that while facing these challenging times, it is certainly positive to know that the insiders consider change necessary, but they also express the recognition of how difficult this change is and how high an engagement is required in keeping it. Furthermore, it is not only healthcare that needs to exit from its silos. Cross-sectoral collaboration is the right direction to go to tackle the dramatic problems of the present times, or at least some of them. It is time to apply the famous phrase attributed to Machiavelli, "never miss the occasion of a crisis", and certainly, we are in multiple ones.

Conflict of Interest

None. ■

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