

The Current Status of Uptake of European Basic Safety Standard (2013/59/Euratom) Requirements.

Results of a Follow-Up Survey in European Radiology Departments.

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Introduction:

The European Council Basic Safety and Standards Directive (BSSD) 2013/59/Euratom, which was transposed into National Member State legislation in early 2018, lays out core radiation protection standards for radiology departments. The Directive mandates regular clinical audit processes which are subject to external inspection. As such, improving BSSD implementation and uptake of supporting processes of clinical audit is a high priority for the European Society of Radiology (ESR) in order to improve departmental compliance with BSSD requirements.

Background:

A survey conducted in 2018 amongst the EuroSafe Imaging Stars network demonstrated several shortcomings across the network and variable BSSD compliance across radiology departments. The results of this initial survey highlighted the need for continued promotion of the BSSD and development of appropriate structures and processes to allow effective clinical audit. Following this survey, several radiation protection and clinical audit related initiatives were introduced by the ESR and EuroSafe Imaging to improve compliance, including the development of the ESR Guide to Clinical Audit, Esperanto.

We present a repeat survey undertaken on behalf of the ESR in February 2021, across the EuroSafe Imaging Star department network to reassess compliance with selected key EC-BSSD requirements.

Description of activity and work:

A 14-question survey was sent via survey monkey to all 128 imaging departments within the EuroSafe network in February 2021, using selected questions from the original survey.

Response rate was 61% (78/128). Questions were focussed around the implementation of key BSSD requirements and supporting processes of audit and re-audit.

Compared to survey responses in 2018, there was overall a mixed response evident- reduction in positive responses were seen in relation to departmental presence of a clinical audit infrastructure to support BSSD implementation (70.15% in 2021, 81.82% in 2018) and to some areas around justification. Significant improvements were observed in questions relations to monitoring dose limits and occupational exposure to the eye (80% in 2021 and 57.63% in 2018), improvements in re-audit processes were also seen.

Conclusions and recommendations:

- Survey results demonstrated a mixed picture of compliance with BSSD requirements when compared to the survey results from 2018. This can be explained by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which may have diverted resources away from developing clinical audit processes in accordance with BSSD requirements.
- The survey results indicate the need for further co-ordinated pan-European action. The European Commission initiatives, QuADRANT, led by the ESR, and SAMIRA will help facilitate necessary improvements in implementation of radiation protection and developing a functional clinical audit infrastructure.