

Abstract: Future Scenario on Radiology 2030-40

by Dr. Johannes Schmidt-Tophoff, Curagita AG, D-Heidelberg (FRG), August 2024

Following a first scenario in 2006, the leading German radiology center network (Radiologienetz), consisting of 400 independent private radiologists in 100 imaging centers and 70 hospital departments managed by Curagita, developed an image of the future of radiology using the established scenario technique. Although primarily developed for Germany, the scenario may be transferred to other countries.

With continuously increasing demand for radiology in terms of patients and images per case and at the same time decreasing supply of radiology in terms of radiologists, techs or budgets, German radiology will cope with further rationalization and even rationing, if today's reserves by oversupply will not be raised. The scenario group foresees 10 main trends in the next 10 years:

1. Shortage of (baby boomer-) radiologists, techs and other personnel,
2. Continuing consolidation of imaging centers by private equity investors,
3. Persistence of reimbursement pressure,
4. Dramatic changes in-patient radiology,
5. Accelerated "turf battles" with part-radiologists,
6. Rising influence by informed patients,
7. More cost- than benefit-driven health insurances,
8. Parallel consolidation in the radiology industry,
9. Continued sub-specialisation in radiology,
10. Megatrend of artificial intelligence (AI) and digitalisation.

These trends will condense into a mixed scenario, dominated by "radiology factories" merged with each operating 10 AI-assisted MRI and CT allowing for 24/7 high volume throughput. The administration from scheduling to billing will be fully automated. Besides these factories we see sub-specialized boutiques, diagnostic centers, part-radiology departments and prevention centers. Beyond that time horizon there might be the extreme of a "google radiology" with images from photo booth-MRIs and uploaded for AI-interpretation.

The radiologist of the future will work in a flexible mode, using AI across the workflow. Image interpretation will "answer questions that have not raised" (Prof. Kauczor) offering "accompanying prevention" (Prof. Bamberger). Interpretation and reports will dramatically change.

Finally, the scenario group proposed measures for the radiologist to prepare for the future.

Read more: www.radiologie2030.de