

Policy on the establishment of national diagnostic reference levels: roles and obligations of the role-players

Purpose

To provide clarity on the roles and obligations of all role-players in the Society of Radiographers of South Africa (SORSA) initiative related to task-teams/sub-committees for the establishment of national diagnostic reference levels.

Background

The South African Association of Physicists in Medicine and Biology (SAAPMB) and SORSA are members of the AfroSafe.rad South Africa chapter established by AfroSafe¹ on 24 April 2018. One of the aims of AfroSafe is the establishment of diagnostic reference levels (DRLs) for Africa.^{2,3} At a DRL inaugural meeting held in Pretoria from 10-14 February 2020, and an African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA) regional meeting on justification of medical exposure (RAF9064 project) held in Pretoria from 26-30 June 2023, SORSA underscored the need to train and retain radiographers with regard to the establishment of national DRLs. It was agreed at a meeting between SORSA and SAAPMB/SAMPS (South African Medical Physics Society) on 12 March 2024 to co-operate and collaborate and establish national DRLs.

Since there were no updates on the establishment of national DRLs, it was agreed at this meeting between SORSA and SAAPMB/SAMPS that a DRL session/workshop should be held at the SORSA-IAFR 2025 Congress from the 5 to 7 September 2025.

Appointment of SORSA DRL task team and/or sub-committee chairpersons

SORSA appointed DRL task team and/or sub-committee chairpersons in January 2025 as per the recommendations of the SORSA-representative who attended the AFRA regional meeting on radiation protection in paediatric and pregnant patients, under the regional project RAF 9064 hosted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from 4-8 December 2023 in Vienna, Austria. The aim of SORSA's webinar on 22 February 2025 is to kick-start DRL training. Thereafter, further training and workshops may be hosted by SORSA related to DRLs.

Roles and ethical responsibilities of role-players

The establishment of national DRLs is a SORSA initiative as a member of the South African chapter of AfroSafe. In view of this it is important that publications of DRL task team results must include a statement of the role of SORSA in all DRL projects. Application for ethical approval of DRL projects must include the role of SORSA. The principles of research ethics must be adhered to in the development of national DRLs.

SORSA permission must be obtained for inclusion of the DRL data in studies by third parties; SORSA must be acknowledged in the studies as SORSA initiated this project on 'National DRLs for South Africa'.

Communication

Quarterly updates to be submitted by the DRL task team, and subcommittee chairpersons to SORSA and SAAPMB. Progress and any challenges should be highlighted.

References

1. AfroSafe. Championing radiation safety in Africa. Available from:
https://inis.iaea.org/collection/NCLCollectionStore/_Public/47/035/47035637.pdf
2. Kawooya M, Nyabanda R, Mwango G, Mansouri B. Update on AfroSafe-rad activities within the scope of EuroSafe call for action. EuroSafe Imaging 2017 / ESI-0015. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1594/esi2017/ESI-0015>
3. Dasegowda, Giridhar et al. Multicenter, international study of CT practices and radiation doses from 10 African countries: An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) baseline study. Physica Medica. 2024; 124 (2024) 103431.
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