

Inaugural PACS and RIS Conference to address educational aspects

Picture archiving and communication system (PACS) and Radiology information system (RIS) is being used throughout the medical profession worldwide. This technology, enabling digital storing and transfer of x-ray images, has radically transformed imaging departments and has recently been implemented throughout Africa.

Although already successfully used at a few leading facilities, there is only limited knowledge and experience to successfully implement and maintain the PACS and RIS system. The inaugural PACS and RIS conference, held in Cape Town from 22 - 24 October 2009, is the ideal platform for addressing this knowledge gap.

The Medical Imaging and Informatics Training Academy (MiiTA) has taken up the challenge of coordinating the conference with the intention to share knowledge, experience and expertise with medical professionals and administrators throughout Africa. This conference is a step toward educating users on how to successfully implement and maintain a PACS and RIS solution and has been established to bridge the educational gap that currently exists.

Philips Medical Systems, proud sponsor of the Inaugural PACS & RIS conference, has become the fastest growing enterprise PACS in Europe, and is on track to be the fastest growing in Africa. As Gary Venter, Philips Medical Systems business line manager IT, explains: "Correct implementation and maintenance of a PACS and RIS solution results in the anticipated benefits being realised, this conference is the ideal opportunity to increase your knowledge and ensure that your PACS and RIS solution is a success."

PACS and RIS is an integrated workflow solution which replaces the current radiological practice of taking x-rays with film and examining hard copy images. Paired with the back-end administration of placing orders, scheduling, reporting and issuing results this process takes time, but owing to the digital nature of PACS & RIS, images and data are now available within seconds, offering a global network outreach. Images can also be manipulated and enhanced offering better diagnosis and patient care in general. "We have elevated medical imaging into the virtual realm where it is no longer bound to physical limitations", says Otto Schulze; co-founder: MiiTA.

Currently in Africa implementations are not being carried out correctly and the solutions are not properly maintained, thus the solution's full potential is not being realised. Continuously evaluating and adjusting the workflow will eventually lead to an optimally functioning imaging department. The dedicated support from implementation to maintenance is crucial for its success. Establishing and enforcing a performance level agreement ensures that the solution maintains the uptime required within the Clinical IT environment.

PACS/RIS is being very successfully implemented at Tygerberg Hospital, for instance. Dr Carter, chief director: Tygerberg

Hospital comments, "The purpose of this edu-conference is to identify the common mistakes and learn from each other to ensure that we successfully navigate our way to an optimised PACS/RIS implementation."

Endorsed by the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Carol Le Roux, senior lecturer of Radiography says, "PACS and RIS has dramatically changed and improved the way that the facilities in which we train our Radiography students, namely Tygerberg Academic Hospital and the Radiology department in particular in this case, operate on a daily basis."

Speakers at the conference include specialists and leaders in their respective fields who will be addressing the issues of PACS and RIS administration. These include Mike Leathes, Johan Schoombee, Otto Schulze, Clive Daniell and Riaan van der Watt. The conference is open to all hospital managers, radiologists, nuclear medicine physicians, clinicians working with imaging, vendors, radiographers, clinical engineers and PACS and RIS administrators.

The Conference will be held at the University of Stellenbosch's Tygerberg Campus. For more information on this conference, go to www.pacsrisafrica.com or contact event organizer Zelda Coetzee-Ingram at Imfunzelelo Events on tel: +27 (0)21 762 1442 or mobile +27 (0)84 657 5476.

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