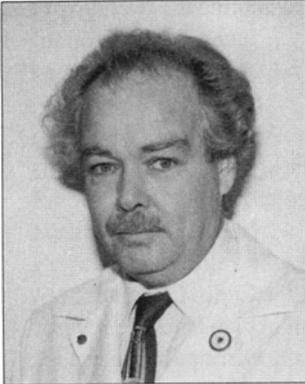


Nuclear Medicine Technology Is Coming of Age



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As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Technologist Section (1995), several issues come to my mind. Of utmost concern, is where are we heading as a profession? Is it time for the Technologist Section to take a more active role in establishing international standards for the profession? In my opinion it is.

In 1976, the Technologist Section received the necessary funds from The Society of Nuclear Medicine to establish the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board (NMTCB). As the NMTCB prepares to enter its sixteenth year in the examination process, it becomes quite apparent that the NMTCB is here to stay.

Mickey Williams, CNMT, immediate past president of the Technologist Section, has outlined his plan for international recognition of the profession through a public awareness campaign (see the Message from the President in the December 1991 issue of this Journal). I believe that Mickey has set forth a groundwork that should encourage the Technologist Section and the NMTCB to look ahead toward international standards for the practice of nuclear medicine technology.

The NMTCB does not recognize foreign training (except for Canadian training), unless the foreign training was on a U.S. military establishment. The NMTCB does have a reciprocity agreement with the Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (CAMRT) that recognizes equivalent testing. By entering into such an agreement, hasn't the NMTCB recognized Canadian training as meeting the same practice standards as those governing U.S. training programs? Is a technologist trained in Canada eligible to take the NMTCB's written examination? If not, then why not? Should the NMTCB and the Technologist Section be working together to encourage all training programs worldwide to adopt the standards set forth by the Joint Review Committee of Educational Programs in Nuclear Medicine Technology (JRCNMT)? I believe that they should be.

Sue Weiss, editor of this Journal, has noted an increased interest in an exchange of articles between this Journal and foreign journals, as well as an increase in the number of international articles published in this Journal. This clearly shows that our colleagues in other countries are looking to us as leaders in nuclear medicine technology. I believe that our role as a leader needs to be carried further.

In August 1992, I had the pleasure of hosting SNM member Mr. Kwang-Ho Jin, chief medical technologist, department of nuclear medicine, Seoul National University Hospital, Seoul, Korea. Mr. Jin's reason for spending the month in the United States was multifaceted. First, he wanted to gain some experience working with a multiheaded SPECT system since his institution has ordered two such systems. He also wanted to find out how he could institute training programs in nuclear medicine technology within Korea that would follow the JRCNMT standards, in the hope that graduates would be eligible to take the NMTCB examination.

With this objective in mind, we reviewed the current training requirements for nuclear medicine technology students at Seoul National University Hospital. I was impressed with how closely their requirements already reflected those of JRCNMT. I was also surprised to see that a bachelor of science degree was a mandatory prerequisite for acceptance into the program.

I supplied Mr. Jin with an extra suitcase of material, which included information on our training program, as well as the self-studies of several other programs. Since our school is a one-year certificate program, I wanted him to have a fair overview of all three types of programs offered in the U.S. I informed him that Kuwait had been negotiating with the NMTCB for eligibility to take the NMTCB examination prior to the invasion of their country. I encouraged him to contact the NMTCB and initiate discussions that might lead to Korean-trained technologists meeting the NMTCB's standards.

Since the Technologist Section is an international organization, I hope that Technologist Section president Paul Hanson, CNMT will step forward and take an active role in implementing international standards for the practice of nuclear medicine technology. Perhaps this could be a charge given to the SNM-TS International Relations Committee.