

AbstractID: 14353 Title: Educational Requirements, Development of Practice Standards, and Establishment of Iraq Medical Physics Society

The goals of this presentation are: (a) Identifying the needs of Iraqi medical physicists for a new curriculum and modern laboratory equipment particularly in the medical schools, (b) determining and developing practice standards that should be followed by medical physicists in Iraqi hospitals and medical institutions, (c) tasking the Iraqi Medical Physics Society (IMPS) to establish guidelines of practice and a mechanism for professional certification through periodic assessment of members credentials to practice medical physics with particular emphasis on the clinical environment.

There are thirteen medical colleges in Iraqi universities where medical physics is included in the undergraduate studies curriculum. The medical physics unit of Mustansiriya Medical College was the only Iraqi medical educational institution that organizes and awards postgraduate academic degrees since 1989. It is now on hold for the last four years. However there is so far no systematic training program for medical physicists recognized by the Higher Education and/ or Health authorities of the central and regional governments to involve the postgraduates in scholarships and training programs in this field. Furthermore, there is a shortage of well-equipped laboratories to conduct original research.

There are four radiation therapy hospitals in Iraq where medical physicists play an essential role in the management of cancer patients. Approximately forty eight medical physicists are working in these hospitals. They are dealing with different radiotherapy technologies ranging from superficial/deep X-ray therapy, Cobalt-60 and linacs. In the 1970's, Baghdad Nuclear Medicine and Radiotherapy Hospital was number one in the Middle East where people from those countries used to be treated there. Decades of economic sanctions and strife in Iraq impeded the professional development of these physicists and the use of the new technology in the medical practice.

The first steps of the project of establishing the Iraqi Medical Physics Society (IMPS) has its origin back in 2005. Since then, efforts have progressed significantly through the e-mail communications to gather as much information as possible about the Iraqi medical physicists. The IMPS now includes 70 professionals in the fields of radiation oncology, diagnostic radiology, nuclear medicine, radiation protection and academic medical physics units. One of the main objectives of IMPS is acting as a forum for Iraqi medical physicists by facilitating their participation in international conferences and workshops through the establishment of collaborative links with other national and international societies, the opportunity of participating in the scientific events of the Middle East Federation of Medical Physics (MEFOMP) and IOMP. IBMP will provide an avenue towards achieving this goal.