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Practice, Policy & Education

COVID-19 narratives from the New York Roentgen Society

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Within the United States, during the Spring of 2020, New York City was hit early and hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. The rapid surge in cases stretched the capacity of the healthcare infrastructure and resulted in recruitment and redeployment of a large number of physicians, including Radiologists and more specifically Radiology Trainees. As you will see, the walls we tend to construct around ourselves crumbled under these extreme circumstances. A city driven inside by a need to physically separate, came together every night at 7 pm, by opening windows and cheering for the healthcare workers who were battling on the frontlines. In light of this, the New York Roentgen Society (NYRS) gave its members an opportunity to share their experiences amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Narratives were solicited from members of the New York imaging community, asking them to share the impact of this most trying year. Three such narratives were selected for publication, all of which came from trainees. The authors each described in their own way how the pandemic has affected their practice.

Dr. Christianson [1] described his experience in a major New York City hospital system, leaving the relative comfort of the reading room to care for critically ill COVID-19 patients in the ICU. In his narrative entitled ““Redeployed” – A Radiology Resident’s Perspective in a Converted Intensive Care Unit” [1], Dr. Christianson relates to us his initial uncertainty in the transition from radiology to critical care medicine, the emotional toll of treating critically ill patients while relaying news to family members who could not be at the bedside of their loved ones, the collegiality among healthcare workers even in crisis, the response from the New York community, and the eventual return to a socially distanced radiology practice.

Dr. Ramjit [2] recounted his experience pivoting from being an interventional radiology fellowship applicant to meeting the exploding need for vascular access on a specialized COVID-19 care team, to eventually treating COVID-19 patients on inpatient medicine wards. His narrative “A radiology resident’s experience with COVID-19 in New York City” [2] provided a technical accounting of his experience on a

vascular access support team, using image-guidance techniques to improve efficiency and fill a need in a hospital that was rapidly becoming overwhelmed. Even as Dr. Gokli participated in direct patient care at the height of the pandemic, he writes about feelings of inadequacy and apprehension as he watched healthcare workers around him functioning in a strained, overwhelmed medical system.

In “Rise” [3], Dr. Myers conveys personal reflections on the COVID-19 experience from the perspective of a radiology resident. Her narrative touches upon the acknowledgement of grief and loss during the height of the pandemic in New York and feeling the full weight of the Physician’s Oath while treating critically ill patients. She recounts the morale boost from the daily 7 pm cheers that rang throughout New York City. In closing, Dr. Myers describes emerging from feelings of fear and loneliness as the city and community of New York began to recover.

In the end, the authors’ experiences mirrored each other’s, and our own. The charge to participate in patient care during an unprecedented health crisis was met and there was a renewed sense of purpose through the anxiety. This pandemic has served as a reminder to all of us in the imaging community that humanity and patient care remain paramount in our practice.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors have no pertinent disclosures.

References

1. Blake Eric Christianson, MD, New York Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell MC. “Redeployed” - a radiology resident’s perspective in a converted intensive care unit (CLM-D-20-01639).
2. Amit Ramjit, MD, Staten Island University Hospital. A radiology resident’s experience with COVID-19 in New York City (CLM-D-20-01686).
3. Hannah Myers, MD, Staten Island University Hospital. “Rise” (CLM-D-20-01615).

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