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Training and Experience Requirements for Different Categories of Radiopharmaceuticals

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Training and Experience Requirements for Different Categories of Radiopharmaceuticals

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General Comment

To provide high-quality patient care, a physician must master the nature of radionuclide therapy and truly understand appropriate indications, selection of radiopharmaceutical, dose selection, method of delivery and potential radiation safety issues and radiation protection. The competency required for radionuclide therapy must include an in-depth understanding of physics, instrumentation, and radiobiology pertaining to radiopharmaceuticals; the interaction of radiation with matter; and the nature and energy of radioactive emissions, radionuclide properties, radioactivity units, physical half-life calculations, bystander and cross-fire effects, and dosimetry.

The physician must have advanced training and skills in nuclear hybrid imaging interpretation and a thorough understanding of the biologic half-life of specific therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals, target expression, target volume, and target heterogeneity prior to delivering therapeutic radionuclides. Training needs provide to solid understanding of radionuclide diagnostics and therapeutics procedures and include understanding of physiology, tumor biology, oncology, and multidisciplinary patient management.

He/she must have advanced expertise in the nuclear medicine which cannot be accomplished unless you have sufficiently long duration of training in nuclear medicine such as provided for certification by the American Board of Nuclear Medicine. Nobody should be allowed to provide radionuclide therapies without at least one year of training in an ACGME accredited nuclear medicine program. Most physicians without such a training dispense such therapies without having advanced expertise in radionuclide therapies.