

1. Objectives

To ensure that every medical exposure has been justified and authorised. A radiation exposure must not be undertaken unless the exposure has been authorised.

2. Responsibilities

Referrers are responsible for providing sufficient medical data to enable the practitioner to decide whether the exposure can be justified.

It is the responsibility of the entitled Practitioner to justify each individual medical exposure. They will take into account the availability of alternative methods not involving ionising radiation.

Operators cannot undertake justification but entitled Operators may undertake authorisation of a medical exposure if the request falls within guidelines issued by an entitled Practitioner. Therapeutic procedures in nuclear medicine are justified and authorised by a practitioner with an appropriate IRMER Practitioner Licence (ARSAC) (there is no operator authorisation of these procedures).

Review of record of previous imaging should be performed during the justification process where possible.

It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that suitable guidelines under which medical exposures can be authorised, are in place for all situations where authorisation may be undertaken by an entitled operator.

The Practitioners to whom the preparation of the Guidelines is delegated will be included in the Level 2 document for the service.

If the Practitioner / Operator is aware, at the time of authorisation, that a recorded clinical evaluation will not result from the exposure, then that exposure must not be authorised.

The Operator who initiates the exposure is responsible for ensuring that prior authorisation has been carried out and properly recorded. Where there is reasonable doubt as to the validity of the justification / authorisation at the time of the exposure, the Operator should take reasonable steps to confirm that the clinical question is current and relevant for the patient present.

3. Practical Procedure

The Practitioner signs the request or completes the appropriate electronic record, or the record in the patient's notes where the referrer, operator and practitioner are the same person, to show they have justified and authorised the exposure, if they are satisfied that the exposure is appropriate to fulfil the clinical requirement. For a TrakCare electronic request imported to the radiology system CRIS, the IRMER referrer can be found within the Events comments field as 'Requested By:' while the CRIS field titled Referrer; represents the person with overall clinical responsibility for the patient (e.g. Consultant).

Entitled Operators may undertake authorisation under specific guidelines for authorisation. Entitled Operators check the clinical details against the appropriate Operator authorisation guidelines and, if the details match a criterion, the Operator signs the request or completes the appropriate electronic record to designate that the medical exposure has been authorised. The responsibility for justification remains with the Practitioner who will have agreed the guidelines. Referrals which do not fall within the guidelines issued by the Practitioner cannot be authorised by an Operator and must be referred to a Practitioner for justification or returned to the Referrer.

The Operator who initiates the exposure must check that prior authorisation has been carried out and properly recorded. Where there is reasonable doubt as to the current validity of the justification / authorisation (e.g. NG tube assessment with no NG tube present), the Operator should confirm that the clinical question is current and relevant for the patient present. This check is to be

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Justification and Authorisation of Medical Exposure	

performed immediately prior to the exposure, at the same time as Patient Identification, Pregnancy etc. If there is any doubt then the operator must not carry out the radiation exposure, except in exceptional circumstances which must be recorded in writing.

Special attention will be given to medical exposures (see EP13) for the following groups:

- Children
- High dose exposures
- Health screening
- Non-Medical Exposures (EP17)
- Exposure of Individuals of Child-Bearing Potential (EP8)
- Breast feeding for nuclear medicine procedures (EP9)

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