

The Status of Interventional Radiology Training: The Egyptian Experience

Interventional radiology (IR) has recently become one of the most competitive medical specialties in the United States.^[1] This could be attributed to the increased awareness about IR at both public and medical levels.

However, there remain marked variations in the structure of IR training across the globe depending on the availability of IR services and qualified IR trainers.

During radiology residency in Egypt, residents receive a 3-month mandatory training in IR. This rotation primarily focuses on basic ultrasound-guided procedures such as biopsies and drainage procedures under direct supervision by fellows and consultants. Residents interested in pursuing IR training may get additional elective rotations in IR, during which they can start practicing basic vascular procedures.

In Egypt, there are two pathways to receive IR training; first is to apply for the “The Egyptian Board of Interventional Radiology,” which is currently the only official IR specialty board certificate in Egypt through the “Ministry of Health.” It is a 2-year training program after successful completion of the Egyptian Board of Diagnostic Radiology or obtaining a Doctor of Medicine “MD” degree in diagnostic radiology. The applicant receives hands-on training in 4–5 different institutes of his/her choice among ten different certified institutes – most of them are university hospitals. Applicants have to sit for first part multiple-choice question (MCQ) examination by the end of the 1st year. On completion of the clinical training, fellows have to go through MCQ examination to become eligible to sit for the clinical and oral examinations. Successful applicants will become Egyptian Board certified in endovascular and IR.

The alternative pathway to IR training in Egypt is institution based, which provides nonstructured training in many aspects of IR procedures. Despite the large volume of IR cases performed in these tertiary care institutions, there is no nation-wide structured IR fellowship program, except under the Egyptian Board of IR. All fellows are supposed to participate in academic, educational, and research activities in their institutes and they are periodically assessed based on logbook and seniors’ evaluations.

The Egyptian Medical Syndicate provides certification for IR consultants either after obtaining the Egyptian Board Certificate or after getting signed and stamped documents with required 3 years of experience after the MD (being a consultant) from one of the tertiary level institutes.

As per a recent survey of IR workforce in Egypt conducted in December 2018,^[2] there are 85 fellows in the screened training centers (75 males and 10 females) and 61 dedicated IR residents (40 males and 21 females) after excluding the diagnostic radiology residents. About 63% of all IR trainees are distributed in Cairo ($n = 92$) and 37% in the rest of Egypt ($n = 54$).

There is no dedicated pathway for the training of interventional neuroradiology in Egypt and it is still totally institution based.

Despite the increased demand for IR services in Egypt especially outside Cairo, there is still lack of well-trained IRs necessitating both government-sponsored nationwide IR training programs for interested physicians and more collaboration with the local and regional IR societies providing and tailoring proper training programs for each area.

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