

Concerning fall in UK radiology equipment spend

The overall UK radiology equipment market spend for the six months to the end of March 2018 is down by around 30% compared to the same period in the previous year.

This is according to latest figures from AXREM (the Association of Healthcare Technology Providers for Imaging, Radiotherapy and Care), which represents all the major medical imaging manufacturers active in the UK.

Commenting on the data, Alan Birks, Director of AXREM, notes concern over reduced investment in medical imaging equipment and the potential impact this will have on patient care.

Mr Birks said: “There is evidence that the overall 30% decline in spend is similar from both NHS customers and the remainder of the market, predominantly private healthcare providers.

“CT spend during the six months to the end of March 2018 has reduced by 43% compared with the same period ending March 2017 and MRI spend has reduced by 30.6%.”¹

A report published by AXREM in August 2017² highlighted the continuing increase in the age of the installed base of medical imaging equipment across the United Kingdom. According to a survey of AXREM member organisations carried out in August 2017, 55% of CT scanners in the UK are more than five years old, with 12% being over 10 years old.

Mr Birks continues: “This age profile can only be addressed by investment in new equipment. The latest technologies afford advances including reduced dose of ionising radiation (X-Rays), and improved visual and functional information aiding more definitive diagnosis and better patient outcomes. Continued use of older equipment potentially denies patients the benefits of the latest technological advances, and can also expose patients to unnecessary risk.

Similarly, a survey of MRI scanners conducted across the NHS by the Clinical Imaging Board in April 2017³ found that 58% of MRI systems were over five years old and 29% were more than 10 years old.

Mr Birks added: “The issue of NHS funding is already high on the political agenda. Lord Darzi in the interim report for his current review (High Quality Care for All: Ten Years On, Ten Years Forward) made the case for having a national conversation about the funding requirements that the health and care system need between now and 2030. One of the conclusions of the report is that a long term funding settlement for health and care is put forward.

Innovative imaging technology offers a real opportunity to improve clinical care and patient safety, if appropriate funding is ring-fenced to enable this investment”.

“The NHS 70th anniversary is also a driver for this discussion with calls for ‘a gift for the NHS’ on its 70th birthday of a plan to secure it for future generations”.

- 1 In unit terms, as reported by AXREM members:
 - CT unit orders: 46 during period 1/10/17 – 31/3/18, compared with 72 during the same period in previous year
 - MRI unit orders: 40 during period 1/10/17 – 31/3/18, compared with 65 during the same period in previous year
- 2 AXREM Aged Asset Article
<http://www.axrem.org.uk/resource/axrem-aged-asset-article/>
- 3 Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) equipment, operations and planning in the NHS – Report from the Clinical Imaging Board April 2017 -
www.rcr.ac.uk/sites/default/files/cib_mri_equipment_report.pdf

The Clinical Imaging Board provides guidance, oversight and support for the continuing development of high-quality clinical imaging services for patients in the UK. It was established in September 2013 by The Royal College of Radiologists (RCR), the Society and College of Radiographers (**SCoR**) and the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (**IPEM**).

Note to editors:

The figures referred to in this statement do not include spend on Ultrasound equipment.



ASSOCIATION OF HEALTHCARE TECHNOLOGY
PROVIDERS FOR IMAGING, RADIOTHERAPY & CARE

AXREM is the trade association representing the suppliers of diagnostic medical imaging, radiotherapy, healthcare IT and care equipment in the UK. AXREM members supply most of the diagnostic medical imaging and radiotherapy equipment installed in UK hospitals. In doing so, our member companies and their employees work side by side with Consultant Radiologists, Radiographers and Practitioners, Oncologists and a wide range of healthcare professionals in delivering healthcare to patients using our technologies. Our members therefore have unique knowledge, experience and insight into the workflow and challenges faced by healthcare professionals on a day-to-day basis, which enables us to develop and offer innovative solutions to improve the speed and quality of diagnostic procedures and treatments with the ultimate aim of improving patient care.

For additional information about AXREM, call 020 7642 8087, email alan.birks@axrem.org.uk or visit www.axrem.org.uk