Professions in Interventional Radiology

Interventional Radiologist

Interventional radiology (IR) is a medical specialty that performs minimally invasive treatments using radiologic imaging for procedure guidance. Interventional radiology treatments have become the primary method of care for a variety of conditions, offering less risk, less pain and less recovery time, compared to open surgery.

Interventional radiologists are board-certified, fellowship trained physicians who specialize in minimally invasive, targeted treatments. Interventional radiologists must graduate from an accredited medical school, pass a licensing examination, and complete at least five years of graduate medical education (residency). In addition, interventional radiologists have several different paths to board certification. Visit the American Board of Radiology (https://theabr.org) (ABR) for more information on becoming an interventional radiologist. This specialized training is certified by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) and takes place in accredited training programs. Interventional radiologists are certified by the American Board of Radiology (ABR) in both Diagnostic Radiology and Vascular and Interventional Radiology. Interventional radiologists have had extensive training and must show expertise in radiation safety, radiation physics, the biological effects of radiation and injury prevention. They must offer the most comprehensive knowledge of the least invasive treatments available coupled with diagnostic and clinical experience.

Interventional radiologists use x-rays, CT, MRI or other imaging guidance to navigate small instruments, like catheters and needles, through blood vessels and organs to treat a variety of diseases. Examples of treatments administered by interventional radiologists include angioplasty, stenting, thrombolysis, embolization, image-guided thermal ablation, and biopsies. These minimally invasive treatments can cure or alleviate symptoms of vascular disease, stroke, uterine fibroids, or cancer. They are also experts at reading x-rays, ultrasounds, CTs, MRIs, and other forms of medical imaging.

Further information about a career as an interventional radiologist can be found on the Society of Interventional Radiology website (www.sirweb.org) (https://www.sirweb.org).

Vascular Interventional Radiographer

As a member of the radiology team, the vascular interventional radiographer works alongside interventional radiologists and nurses. The radiographer assists the interventional radiologist with diagnostic angiographic procedures as well as complex vascular and nonvascular interventional and therapeutic procedures. Vascular interventional radiographers must have a combination of technical, radiologic, and clinical skills.

Vascular interventional radiographers perform many duties during an interventional procedure. The radiographer is responsible for obtaining all equipment needed for a procedure, positioning and imaging patients, resolving equipment issues, and demonstrating knowledge of human anatomy, radiation safety, interventional supplies, and equipment operation.

Vascular interventional radiographers are certified by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists.
For specific pathway requirements to certification, visit the ARRT’s Vascular Interventional Radiology page.

Additional career information about vascular interventional radiography can be found in a booklet on the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) website.

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