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Recommendations for the coordination of Neurology and Neuroradiology departments in the management of patients with multiple sclerosis

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Background

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is widely used for the diagnosis and follow-up of patients with multiple sclerosis (MS). It is considered the most reliable and accurate paraclinical tool to evaluate disease activity and progression due to the high sensitivity to detect demyelinating lesions. Coordination between Neurology and Neuroradiology departments is essential to ensure that radiological studies are effectively performed and interpreted. However, in clinical practice, this coordination can be improved to maximize MS management and care.

Objectives

To establish a set of organizational recommendations focused on the coordination between neurologists and neuroradiologists to improve MS management in clinical practice.

Methods

A panel of 17 experts, including neurologists and neuroradiologists, from eight Spanish academic hospitals participated in the study. The Consensus Recommendation Guideline was conducted in four phases: 1) definition of the scope and methodology of the study; 2) review of the literature on good practices or recommendations in the use of MRI in MS; 3) discussion of drafted recommendations to achieve a consensus between the authors; 4) formalization and validation of the contents in a set of recommendations.

Results

We provide nine recommendations to improve the coordination between Neurology and Neuroradiology departments, which can be summarized as follows: 1) standardize the MRI requests, reports and schedules, 2) create shared protocols for MRI studies, 3) establish multidisciplinary working committees and coordination sessions, and 4) generate formal communication channels to improve the coordination between professionals from both departments. These recommendations are based on the available scientific evidence, international good practice guidelines and the experience of the panel experts.

Conclusions

We propose a series of recommendations expected to serve as a functional guide to implement improvements in the coordination between neurologists and neuroradiologists that will ultimately lead to improve the diagnosis and follow-up of MS patients.

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