

# AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEUROIMAGING NEWSLETTER



Editor: Charles H. Tegeler, M.D.

February, 1997

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*John C. Mazziotta, M.D., Ph.D.*

As our society approaches its 20th Anniversary, we face the ironic paradox of having an abundance of new methods and insights into neurologic diseases through neuroimaging while, at the same time, facing extreme economic and political pressure to constrain our abilities to practice neuroimaging in a clinical context. We must capitalize on the former and resist the latter. It is only through our integrated use of neuroimaging as clinicians that we will properly be able to utilize the rapidly evolving neuroimaging tools to better care for patients with both expertise and appropriate costs. Advances in interventional therapeutics for ischemic brain disease already require urgent neuroimaging involving MRI, CT, ultrasound, and perhaps emission tomographic techniques, all in a very restricted time window. Concomitantly, the entry of functional imaging into the mainstream of clinical diagnostics and therapeutic management will require thorough understanding of not just the neuroanatomy of the brain, but also its physiology, biochemistry, and hemodynamics. This is the very essence of what a neurologist is trained to understand and act upon.

An analogous situation exists for other specialists. Cardiologists, obstetricians, urologists, orthopedic surgeons, and neurosurgeons all have or now employ advanced imaging techniques in the office, clinic, or operating room. Such an approach represents the best in patient care, the opportunity for good medical economics and just plain common sense. We owe it to our patients and ourselves to unite with other medical specialty groups who use neuroimaging in a clinical setting for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes. I have asked the leadership of the ASN to

join with me in such an effort and I believe the outcome will be as valuable as it is logical.

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**"We owe it to our patients to unite with other medical society groups who use neuroimaging in a clinical setting...."**

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I hope to see all of you in San Juan for our 20th Anniversary Meeting and to rededicate our Society's mission to excellence in patient care, appropriate and conservative costs for our patients, advances in our knowledge and expertise as well as the maintenance of our access and opportunities in using the appropriate imaging tools to help our patients.

John C. Mazziotta, M.D., Ph.D.  
President  
American Society for Neuroimaging

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## Accreditation of Vascular Ultrasound Laboratories

ASN members who perform or interpret vascular ultrasound studies should be aware of some recent changes in the Medicare reimbursement policies for many states. In order to be reimbursed, many regional carriers will now require that technologists performing vascular ultrasound studies possess an RVT or an RCVT credential, or that the laboratory be accredited by ICAVL (Intersocietal Commission for Accreditation of Vascular Laboratories). This includes carotid ultrasound and transcranial Doppler studies. In at least one state, Virginia, beginning in February of 1998, it will be mandatory that the laboratory have ICAVL accreditation in order to receive reimbursement for vascular ultrasound studies. These policies do not directly address the issue of studies actually performed by physicians, as is often the case with TCD. You should check with your regional/state carrier for Medicare to obtain the latest

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# AMERICAN MEDICAL ACCREDITATION PROGRAM (AMAP) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## Introduction

Changes in the health care marketplace, including growing demands for physician accountability have presented the American Medical Association and its partners in the Federation with a unique opportunity to create and implement the first widely accepted accreditation process for America's more than 600,000 physicians. Through the creation of the American Medical Accreditation Program (AMAP), the medical profession itself will take the responsibility for establishing the national standard of quality for physicians.

When fully implemented, AMAP will evaluate each physician who applies for accreditation, utilizing uniform standards for qualifications and performance. These evaluations will become the primary source of trusted information for the entire health care industry. AMAP also will strongly emphasize continuing enhancement of physicians' clinical performance, providing them with information and practical assistance in improving the quality of patient care. AMAP will review and evaluate the credentials, personal qualifications, environment of care, clinical performance, and patient care outcomes of every physician who seeks accreditation. Those who meet the AMAP standards will be designated as "AMAP accredited," recognition that they have met stringent national standards for physician quality. No other organization currently conducts a program of this scope or depth.

## Role of Medical Societies

AMAP will be implemented in large measure through collaborative relationships with state and county medical societies. In areas where a partnership with a medical society cannot be developed, commercial vendors may be utilized. In addition,

# CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS

## MRI/CT Exam

The American Society of Neuroimaging (ASN) examination in MRI/CT is designed to assess a physician's ability to apply knowledge, concepts and principles of neuroimaging that constitute the basis of safe and effective patient care.

It is designed to assess whether the candidate can apply the medical knowledge and understanding of biomedical and clinical sciences considered essential for the unsupervised practice of neuroimaging.

The MRI/CT Examination is based on the assumption that the applicant's skills include facility with MRI/CT physics and the ability to independently interpret MRI/CT images (normal anatomy, pathologic conditions and artifacts). The MRI/CT Examination is not derived from MRI courses, platform presentations, seminars, technical exhibits or scientific posters presented at the Annual Meeting of the ASN.

## Neurosonology Examination

The American Society of Neuroimaging examination in Neurosonology is designed to assess a physician's ability to apply knowledge, concepts and principles of neuroimaging that constitute the basis of safe and effective patient care.

It is designed to assess whether the candidate can apply the medical knowledge and understanding of biomedical and clinical sciences

there will be defined relationships with several national accreditation or professional organizations. These relationships will generally be in one of three categories:

- Contractual partners for AMAP operations;
- Recognized vendors for AMAP-accepted products or services; or
- Mutual recognition or exchange of data relationships.

considered essential for the unsupervised practice of neuroimaging.

The Neurosonology Examination is offered to assess proficiency in Neurosonology. The examination is intended for physicians who, through several years of training and experience in this neuroimaging modality, have acquired enough of a foundation in the basic principles and clinical interpretation of neurosonology to be able to interpret these studies independently.

## Eligibility

To be eligible for the Neurosonology examination, a candidate must meet the following criteria:

- Be a Board Certified or Board Eligible physician;
  - Hold a valid medical license (or Institutional training license for residents);
- For MRI/CT: Have completed a neurology/neurosurgery/radiology/pediatrics residency which has met guidelines of adequate training in MRI/CT interpretation as verified by a letter from program director; or
- If such a verification letter cannot be obtained, verification of 40 CME hours in MRI/CT and verified supervised interpretation of 400 MRI/CT cases.
- For Neurosonology: have completed a residency training program which has met guidelines of adequate training in neurosonology as verified by a letter from program director; or
- If such verification letter cannot be obtained, verification of completion of at least 40 hours of Category I CME in neurosonology covering the above topics during the past three years and verification of interpretation of at least 100 neurosonology studies under supervision.

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### Mutual Recognition/Exchange of Data

Recognized accreditation organizations will also be required to provide information to AMAP to permit verification of the accreditation status of practice sites of physicians applying for AMAP accreditation.

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reimbursement policies, since many specific aspects are left to the discretion of the regional carrier.

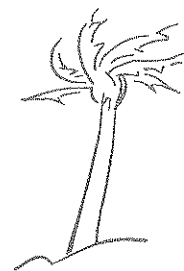
As part of this increasing need for accreditation of vascular labs, ASN members should consider becoming involved in the ICAVL process of voluntary accreditation. The ICAVL is a multi-disciplinary, nonprofit organization formed in 1990, with the purpose of creating a voluntary process of accreditation for vascular labs, improving the quality of testing, and recognizing those labs that meet certain minimum standards and criteria. Founding organizations included the American Academy of Neurology, the American College of Radiology, the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine, the North American Society for Cardiovascular Surgery, the Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers, and the Society of Vascular Technology. Others added since 1990 include the Joint Section on Cerebrovascular Surgery/American Association of Neurological Surgeons and Congress of Neurological Surgeons, the American College of Cardiology, and the Society of Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiology.

The initial areas of accreditation were peripheral arterial, peripheral venous, cerebrovascular (split last year into extra- and intracranial categories), and visceral vascular. Labs that perform >100 studies in a particular area yearly are eligible for participation. At present, 2,850 labs have purchased the Standards and/or self study documents, and 698 labs have been accredited. Sixty-four percent of accredited labs are hospital based; extracranial cerebrovascular is the most popular so far (662 labs). Although only recently added, 35 labs have been accredited in cerebrovascular intracranial testing. Over half of the accredited labs have vascular surgeons as medical directors (56%), with other specialties

## 20th Annual Meeting to be held March 5-8, 1997 at the Condado Plaza Hotel and Casino San Juan, Puerto Rico

The 20th Annual Meeting of the ASN will be held at the Condado Plaza Hotel and Casino March 5-8, 1997. The Condado Plaza is fifteen minutes from the airport, and ten minutes from the both Old San Juan and the Business District. The hotel has three pools - one is complete with a Spanish castle and water slide, while another is saltwater and overlooks the ocean. The Condado Plaza boasts seven restaurants and the largest casino in the Caribbean. Sports lovers can enjoy sailing, wind surfing and kayaking. The hotel's staff can arrange golf and deep-sea fishing. A world-class fitness center provides the ultimate exercise equipment, saunas, whirlpools and massages. Camp Taino, for kids, provides fun and supervised activities. Baby-sitting services are also available, so bring your entire family for a great Caribbean experience!

### Meeting Schedule



#### Wednesday, March 5, 1997

All Day Committee Meetings  
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm Registration  
7:00 pm Welcome Reception

#### Thursday, March 6, 1997

8:00 am - 5:30 pm Registration  
6:45 am - 8:15 pm Acute Stroke Breakfast Seminar - Louis Caplan, MD, Director  
8:30 am - 5:30 pm Basic Neurosonology Course - Edward Feldmann, MD, Director  
MRI Course - John Chawluk, MD, Director  
1:30 pm - 5:30 pm Advanced Neurosonology Course - Charles Tegeler, MD, Director  
6:30 pm Wine and Cheese Reception

#### Friday, March 7, 1997

8:00 am - 5:30 pm Registration  
6:45 am - 8:15 pm Pediatric Neurosonology Seminar - Asma Fisher, MD, Director  
Functional Imaging Seminar - John Mazziotta, MD, PhD, Director  
8:30 am - 12:30 pm Neurosonology Workshop - Camilo Gomez, MD, Director  
MRI Course (continued)  
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm ASN Business Meeting Luncheon  
1:30 pm - 5:30 pm Integrated Clinical Neuroimaging Symposium  
Charles Tegeler, MD and Ilydio Polachini, MD, Co-Directors  
7:00 pm Reception

#### Saturday, March 8, 1997

7:00 am - 12:00 pm Registration  
7:00 am - 10:00 am Interventional Neuroimaging Seminar, SH Kori, MD, Director  
8:00 am - 1:00 pm Scientific Symposium and Summary in Spanish  
Joseph Masdeu, MD, Director  
10:00 am - 12:00 pm Accreditation of Vascular Labs - Phillip Bendick, MD, Director

including radiologists (20%), general surgery (6%), internal medicine (3%), neurology (4%), cardiology (4%), and shared directorships (7%).

Since 1990, Dr. William M. McKinney and Charles H. Tegeler have represented the AAN on the ICAVL Board of Directors. With strong ties to the ASN,

Drs. McKinney and Tegeler were indirectly able to also represent the interests of the ASN membership. However, with the rapidly changing medical climate and unique membership goals of the ASN, this indirect representation will not be adequate in the future. In view of the ASN's new

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American Society of Neuroimaging  
5841 Cedar Lake Road, Suite 108  
Minneapolis, MN 55416

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status with the AMA, the long history of member involvement and excellence in cerebrovascular testing, the unique membership goals, and the established certification process and examination for physician in neurosonology (still the only certification process for physicians in neurosonology), the ASN Board of Directors has applied for membership on the ICAVL Board of Directors.

In light of the ASN's hopes to obtain Board of Directors status in the ICAVL, and from the perspective of practical laboratory management, ASN members involved in cerebrovascular ultrasound testing should apply for ICAVL accreditation. As part of that process of lab accreditation, the ASN Certification in Neurosonology is one important way for the Medical Director or Medical Staff to demonstrate training and knowledge in neurosonology. Thus, ASN members that have not yet met the requirements or passed the neurosonology examination are encouraged to do so. The ASN neurosonology examination is offered this coming March at the annual meeting. The ASN office can provide information about the requirements to sit for the exam. For more information about lab accreditation, contact the ICAVL, 14750 Sweiter Land, Suite 102, Laurel MD, 20707-5906, or call (410) 872-0100 or fax (410) 872-0030.

## Mark Your Calendar



The 21st Annual Meeting  
of the American Society of  
Neuroimaging

Orlando, Florida  
February 26 - 28, 1998