



## Statement in response to

### **'Position statement and best practice recommendations on the imaging use of ultrasound'**

**Published by ESR Ultrasound Sub Committee**

**Insights Imaging (2020) DOI: 10.1186/s13244-020-00919-x**

BMUS agrees with the majority of the recommendations made in the position statement to support best practice in medical ultrasound with the intention of safeguarding patients. However, as multi-professional organisation we take issue with the following statement made in the paper (page 8):

*"However, considering the live scanning mode and operator dependency in the individual clinical setting, ESR strongly advocates ultrasound use by doctors, providing fast and accurate diagnosis using the multidimensional and pattern-based skills of radiologists or other medical specialists acquired during their speciality training."*

Whilst the paper acknowledges the presence of sonographers within the UK, the statement published is the complete antithesis of our practice and experience in the UK. The vast majority of diagnostic ultrasound examinations are now performed by sonographers, with at least 85% of activity being undertaken by these non-medical practitioners. The term "sonographer" is used to describe practitioners who undertake and report on a range of ultrasound examinations including, not exclusively, obstetrics, general medical, gynaecology, vascular, MSK and head and neck imaging. Sonographers provide a safe and effective practice, without which, the diagnostic service in the UK would collapse.

Sonographers are supported in their practice by bodies such as BMUS, SCoR and the SVT. The RCR clearly identifies the role of the non-medical practitioner, the sonographer, and support their role within 21<sup>st</sup> century radiology in the UK. BMUS supports the remainder of the ESR position statement but believes that the multi-disciplinary team working, that has developed with such success in the UK, further provides the patient reassurance of safe and effective care that one would expect from the NHS.

*BMUS feel that the statement as made reflects the differences in practice in Europe and does not reflect current practice in the UK. In particular it is influenced by the significant differences in some larger European countries in the funding and remuneration of healthcare.*

The majority of sonographers within the UK are registered as radiographers, midwives or healthcare professionals who are able to hold statutory registration with the HCPC, NMC or GMC. To safeguard patients, and to be able to hold practitioners to account, BMUS recognises the very real and urgent need for statutory regulation of ultrasound practice in the UK where non-medical activity is so widespread.

Medico-legally, the term sonographer must become a protected title to better support the principles laid out in the ESR statement. BMUS would be happy to discuss these issues further and to provide a full briefing as to the activities the society has been involved in to date to support the regulation and protection of sonography and the practitioners undertaking such a vital role within our NHS.