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An overview on medical imaging system in Albania during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Albania is a small country in the western Balkans with a population of 2.8 million. The health system has undergone major transformations especially in the last 10 years especially with the involvement of the private sector in health services. Despite the improvements made, the global pandemic COVID-19 found the Albanian health system unprepared, highlighting the problems and its limitations. Diagnostic imaging played an important role in diagnosis of patients affected by Covid-19. In this work we made an overview study of Albanian medical imaging system focused on the current situation of the equipment, technology and the standards in the entire public and private health system. In our study we gather information from public sector (25 district hospitals, 11 regional hospitals, 4 university hospitals, 1 trauma university center), 10 major private hospitals and more than 60 radiologic centers from public and private health sector. In other hand we analyzed the information's provided by the national medical register regarding the technical specifications of these equipment and compared the result with OECD indicators and COCIR "Golden Rules". Diagnostic imaging in Albania uses a great variety of equipment. In total are in use 18 MRI, 60 CT, 1 PET-CT, 50 CBCT and more than 500 conventional and digital radiography devices, fluoroscopy and mammography equipment. Compared with OECD units per million population, the report of units per 1 million habitants in Albania is under the average number (OECD Health Statistics 2018). Albania. Dental imaging prioritizes the sector with the best ratio while the number of PET equipment is extremely low. We found deterioration of the situation regarding the fulfilment of COCIR "Golden Rules" compared with 2015. Actually, more than 65 % of the installed equipment base is between six to ten years old, 20 % is less than five years old and 15 % of the installed equipment is more than ten years old.

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