

Guidelines for Imaging to Estimate Bone Age in Medio-Legal Situations

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Purpose: To promote awareness of the best practice guidelines resulting from collaborative between the International Society of Forensic Radiographers and Radiologic Technologists (ISRRT) and the International Association of Forensic Radiographers (IAFR)

Materials & Methods: Forensic radiography applies to any imaging that is used to answer questions of law. Refugees seeking asylum and human trafficking are a growing problem internationally. Some countries have suggested the use of radiography for age estimation to inform asylum seeker applications, as applications for asylum for children are processed differently than those of adults. Different imaging techniques have been suggested which include x-rays, ultrasound, MRI and CT.

Results: Medico-legal considerations for Radiographers include Justification (risk versus benefit) in a medico-legal setting, as well as obtaining valid consent. A Working Group led by the IAFR has consulted with other professions to establish what imaging techniques should be employed to minimise radiation dose to the refugee or victim of human trafficking whilst providing the legal authorities with the information required to estimate the age of the individual.

Conclusions: It is anticipated that the publication of these guidelines will assist Radiographers who image refugees or victims of human trafficking to ensure best practice is provided worldwide.

Keywords: bone, age, estimation, refugee, asylum seeker