

Title

‘The MRI Education Course’ – a free resource for the community to provide MRI education, across the Europe and Iran, established during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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To the Editor:

MRI teaching is commonly undertaken within individual institutions as well as less frequently, but often with a wider range of experts involved in the teaching program, at national and international conferences.^{1,2}

The latter approach often requires delegates to travel long distances to access educational material and, combined with often expensive registration fees, precludes those who cannot afford this approach. There are a few dedicated video channels to MRI education, allowing for users to catch up on topics that they may have missed during their lecture course.^{3,4,5}

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was commonplace to move to an online platform to deliver content. We have initiated and developed an online, open access, MRI education course to support free magnetic resonance for all.

An overview of the course

The education course was initially designed and implemented by J.T.G. in January 2021 to provide shared MRI education between the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. An online platform (Microsoft Teams, Microsoft, USA) was chosen to run the course, with talks live recorded and then recordings were placed on the British and Irish Chapter of the ISMRM website for free access post-event⁵. Potential attendees were contacted via internal mailing lists, and speakers approached through known contacts in the field.

Dissemination to a wider audience

In Autumn 2021, the initiative was extended to the British and Irish Chapter of the International Society of Magnetic Resonance in Medicine (BIC-ISMRM), with Twitter, LinkedIn, and the BIC-ISMRM Jisc mailing list used to disseminate the upcoming talk invites.⁷

To expand the course, European ISMRM chapters were approached to suggest topics for talks and potential speakers, and to share the invites with their members.

Education framework

The talks in each series were categorised into ‘physics’ and ‘clinical applications’ of MRI. If a talk on MRI safety was included, it was clearly signposted that it did not replace institutional safety requirements. Time for questions and answers was provided at the end of most talks. No funding or fees were sought for the course.

Lecture analysis and continuing development

The number of participants at each talk was recorded, and a feedback form was circulated at the end of each lecture series to gather insight for further improvement.

So far, talks have ranged from introductory lectures in MRI Physics, through to hyperpolarized MRI, lung, and prostate imaging, with a total of 27 talks delivered from January 2021 to Summer 2022. Speakers, drawn from across the European and the North American continent, included academics, healthcare professionals, and industrial employees. There are 590 subscribers to the BIC-ISMRM mailing list, with subscribers located from around the world with, on average, over 100 attendees for each talk.

Feedback from the lecture series was primarily positive, with individuals expressing their thanks for providing high quality free education and attending more than 50% of the talks or re-watching the recordings. Talk attendees included researchers and clinicians at different career stages.

In conclusion, a free education initiative has been instigated and grown to encompass nearly all of Europe, to provide freely accessible magnetic resonance, and associated science and safety, education. To access recordings of previous talks, please visit the MR Education series page on the BIC-ISMRM website.⁶ To access the future talks, please sign up to the BIC-ISMRM Jisc mailing list to receive invites.⁷

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