

5. Nuclear Medicine in Australia

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In Australia nuclear medicine is a subspeciality of internal medicine and is predominantly practiced by physicians. However, the recent establishment of a conjoint training program by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and the Royal Australasian College of Radiologists has facilitated the admission of radiologists to the practice of nuclear medicine and election to the Australian and New Zealand Association of Physicians in Nuclear Medicine (ANZAPNM) provides specialist recognition. The ANZAPNM is responsible for training of all nuclear physicians and seeks to maintain the highest standards of practice by its members. In particular specialist committees of ANZAPNM, such as the newly-formed Therapy Subcommittee, seek to ensure the safe efficacious clinical use of radiopharmaceuticals throughout Australasia. Direct registration with government regulatory and funding agencies, to achieve these goals, is a major role of the ANZAPNM.

The Australian and New Zealand Society of Nuclear Medicine is the representative body for all physicians, scientists, technologists and nurses practicing nuclear medicine and it is responsible for organizing scientific

meetings and accrediting technologist training.

Research is performed mainly in teaching hospitals in the capital cities where nuclear medicine physicians enjoy University affiliations and there is a necessary balance of private practice in hospital appointments which support academic endeavors and also sustains clinical research by private practitioners without formal teaching hospital appointments.

Australian nuclear physicians often practice internal medicine, radiology, pediatric, or even surgery, in addition to nuclear medicine, which provides a broad perspective to diagnostic studies and stimulates the development of therapeutic nuclear medicine.

From the earliest days of nuclear medicine in Australia in the 1960's the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organization (ANSTO) has played a major role in the development of both diagnostic and therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals and it is hoped that despite some uncertainty regarding the long term future of the reactor in Sydney, ANSTO will remain a major producer of radionuclides, and a research and development center for Australian nuclear medicine.