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ACR MR Accreditation: Perspectives on Improving MR Quality Control in Korea

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This lecture explores how ACR MR accreditation can inform and enhance MR quality control practices in Korea. While both systems share many foundational elements, distinct differences highlight opportunities for improvement.

ACR MR accreditation provides standardized guidelines to ensure safe and accurate MRI examinations for patients. Established under the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA), it is mandatory for any facility that delivers advanced diagnostic imaging services under Medicare.

To achieve accreditation, facilities must submit documentation covering four main areas: Personnel qualifications, Equipment performance (acceptance tests and annual performance evaluations), Quality control and safety records (phantom tests, preventive maintenance, MR safety program), Clinical images (module-based case submissions). These requirements serve as a rigorous external validation of a facility's ability to meet national performance and safety standards.

Below are the primary areas where ACR MR accreditation diverges from Korea's current quality control framework:

1. Personnel Requirements

ACR mandates the involvement of a qualified medical physicist and an MR scientist. These professionals design, implement, and document the entire MRI quality control and safety program. In Korea, such roles are less formally defined, and responsibilities often fall under broader radiology or technical staff duties.

2. Clinical Image Testing

Under ACR standards, facilities choose modules that cover a broad range of clinical scenarios, and they must meet every specified criterion. In Korea, the clinical image evaluation uses a pass mark of 60 points, allowing some flexibility in which requirements must be strictly met.

3. MRI Safety Program Evaluation

ACR accreditation includes a formal assessment of the MRI safety program. Korean quality control guidelines do not currently mandate an external safety evaluation, relying instead on each hospital's internal protocols.

Korea also offers a quality-management certification for hospitals and clinics administered by the Korean Society of Radiology, but it largely serves to encourage radiologists to take a more proactive role in quality control and provides almost no tangible rewards. A voluntary accreditation system with strong incentives—similar to the ACR MR Accreditation—could serve as an effective alternative.

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