

Medical Imaging In Developing Countries

Lack of Availability

Everyone around the world experiences sickness at some point in their life. With easy access to medical imaging, it would be beneficial to aid in diagnosis for those in need. However, many people living in developing countries do not have that ease available to them. Whether it be for financial reasons, or there are simply no facilities to visit. According to the World Health Organization, about two thirds of the world population is living without access to medical imaging technology.¹ Areas around the globe without 20 radiologists per million residents, is considered a “radiologic scarce zone”, which is estimated to be around 3.5 to 4.7 billion people.¹ Even with access, what is the quality of care like? What are the standards of health care compared to those in the United States? In Honduras, 38% of people are without medical care and access to medical supplies.¹ Some type of action must be put in place to ensure health care across the globe, including medical imaging.



Figure 2. A look inside of an x-ray room in Haiti.²

Cost of Imaging and Equipment

Figure 1 shows a break down of the cost of a chest x ray in the United States, where most people have health insurance and easy access to medical care. At prices like these, who would be able to afford care in developing countries? The equipment costs, which can be seen in Figure 3, also pose a challenge to developing countries. In fact, a lot of times “hand me down” equipment from more established countries are donated to those in need.

United States Aid

There are many programs in place in the United States, like RAD-AID, which brings aid to developing countries to give access to medical imaging. “RAD-AID is a dynamic non-profit organization that is determined to help developing countries implement and optimize radiology and health imaging services whilst ensuring these radiology services integrate with public health programmes”.³



Figure 1. Representation of the cost of a chest x-ray around the United States.

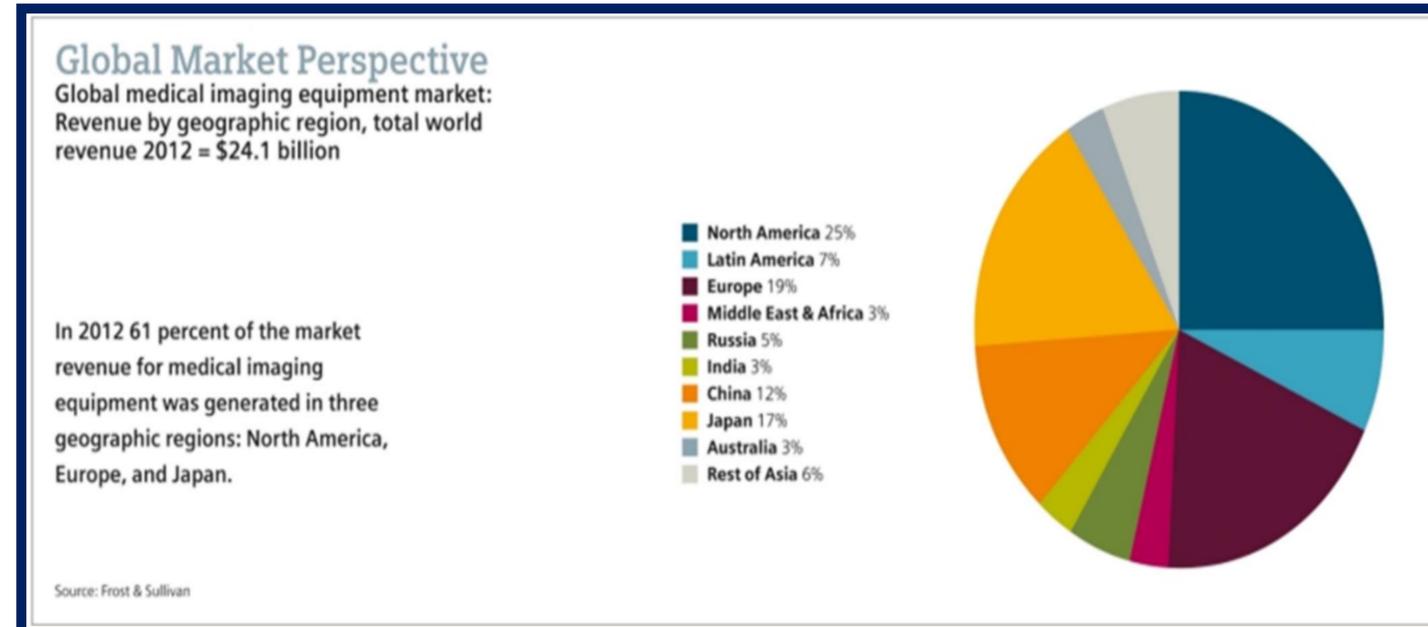


Figure 3. Graph showing the global revenue from medical imaging equipment

References

1. International Radiology for Developing Countries: The Delivery of Medical Imaging Services to a Honduran Radiologic Scarce Zone
Dross, Peter E. et al.
Journal of the American College of Radiology , Volume 11 , Issue 12 , 1173 - 1177
2. Shontag, D. Leg Lost, Dancer Is Caught Between Caregivers. The New York Times. April 2010. <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/13/world/americas/13amputee.html>
3. 8. RAD-AID International. <https://www.rad-aid.org/about-us/>