



September 23, 2020

**Address by a retired President of the PSWTC by internet via the Nuc. Gang Website.
Delivered from his office situated close to the nearest nuclear reactor in the area.**



Dear Colleagues,

It was November 28, 2018, when I last wrote a Reactor Side Chat. At that time, I was ending my year as the President of the chapter and I figured I was done and had nothing more to say. As it turns out, I have more to say. While sitting alone recently in my empty office a thought hit me like a bolt of lightning from the heavens. What do Nuclear Medicine and Covid-19 have in common? Any guesses? Well ok, here is the big reveal without, by the way, starting an 88,000 acre reveal party wildfire. Ready for it – Time – Distance - Shielding. What? Yes, the old TDS equation every NMT knows. So how does this work you ask?

TIME: When working with radioactive materials everyone knows the less time you spend in the presence of the material the less exposure you will receive. The goal is to keep your exposure ALARA. The recommendation for limiting your exposure to the COVID-19 virus is to spend as little time in the presence of other people as possible. Therefore, by extension treating other people as if they were radioactive and limiting your time with them may keep your chances of getting the COVID-19 virus ALARA. I do not think the acronym ALARA has yet found its way into the COVID lingo yet, but to me it seems to fit so I am taking the liberty to associate it. Maybe it will catch on. Just another contribution from Nuclear Medicine to save the world.

DISTANCE: When working with radioactive materials, you want to stay as far away from the material you are working with; again, this is to keep your exposure ALARA. Once a patient has been injected, we send them either away, or in the case of PET patients, place them in a shielded quiet dark room by themselves. Once the patient is on the imaging table, we always want to maintain at least a six-foot distance or more from the patient to keep our exposure ALARA. This is really sounding like COVID stuff now. Did Nuclear Medicine actually come up with the concept of social distancing? The COVID-19 recommendation for safely interacting with other people is to maintain a social distance of six feet. Here is a thought: Has anybody tried applying the inverse square law to the science backing up the six-foot recommendation? Perhaps we can get closer to each other than we think. This might be a good project for an enterprising nuclear medicine student to undertake.

SHIELDING: As Nuclear Medicine Technologists, we are all over this one. For most situations, using lead (in some cases lots of it) will do the trick. I am going to throw in the other forms of PPE here as well such as gloves, eye protection, lab coats, closed-toed shoes, and long pants. All we need to add is a face covering and we have the entire suggested COVID-19 shielding (protective) uniform.

So there you have it. Nuclear Medicine has had the answers from the beginning.

Everyone be safe out there. You are more valuable healthy than quarantined or sick. Keep doing what you are doing; you are the best of the best.

Best regards,

Dave