

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF MEDICAL PHYSICS

VENUE: SNAS, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

7TH NOVEMBER 2018

GHANA REPORT

The Ghana Society for Medical Physics celebrated the International Day of Medical Physics at the School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences, Ghana Atomic Energy Commission on the 7th of November 2018, under the theme “Medical Physics for patient benefit”. The main goal of the celebration was to raise awareness about the role Medical Physicists play for the benefit of patients.

The International Day of Medical Physics is celebrated annually on 7th November which is the birthday of Marie Curie, a popular female scientist who pioneered research in radiation. Prof. John Amuasi, the Chairman for the occasion encouraged participants to take advantage that the platform presents to raise the needed awareness about the Medical Physics profession.

President of the Ghana Society for Medical Physics, Mr. Eric Addison, indicated that Ghana was joining the rest of the world to celebrate the International Day of Medical Physics. He noted that the minimum requirement necessary to qualify someone as a Medical Physicist in Ghana is a Masters degree in Medical Physics and a 2-year clinical internship.

Mr. Addison stressed that the need for Medical Physicists cannot be over emphasized, however, they have been relatively less visible to members of the public compared to other health professionals. He encouraged Medical Physicists to be active and engage in activities that will make them visibly seen in the healthcare system of the country. He advised government and the Ministry of Health to take urgent steps towards proper placement of Medical Physicists in the health structure of Ghana.

Dr. Francis Hasford, the Head of Medical Physics at the University of Ghana and also the Secretary General of the Federation of African Medical Physics Organizations, highlighted on the role that the Federation is playing to support the growth of Medical Physics in Africa. He noted that recognition of Medical Physicists is key to advance the profession in Africa and indicated that Ghana has been voted as the headquarters of the Federation of African Medical Physics Organizations.

On his part, Dr. Elvis Tiburu, the Head of Biomedical Engineering of the University of Ghana, spoke about the role that medical instrumentation plays in better patient care and management. He encouraged government and other stakeholder agencies to support biomedical engineers and equip them in the use of locally available materials for the fabrication of some needed hospital equipment that are otherwise expensive to purchase from overseas. He also indicated the need for promotion of multi-disciplinary research studies and the engagement of experts in the procurement of medical equipment into the country’s hospitals.

The keynote speech for the Medical Physics Day was delivered by Mr. George Acquah, the Head of Medical Physics of the SGMC Cancer Centre. He explained that Medical Physics deals with the application of physics principles for the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. Medical Physicists are employed in the clinical fields of radiotherapy, diagnostic radiology and nuclear medicine to play active roles in the management of several disease conditions such as cancers.

Mr. Acquah intimated that the theme for the 2018 International Day of Medical Physics celebration is very sensitive and dear to the hearts of Medical Physicists since they have a key responsibility of ensuring the safe use of radiation in the medical field. In order to achieve a particular diagnostic or treatment goal in radiation medicine, the work of the Medical Physicist is key.

Medical Physicists are central to radiation treatment of cancers and the development and advancement of medical imaging techniques. Medical Physicists are an indispensable part of the healthcare team, assuring the safe and effective use of radiation-emitting equipment, Mr. Acquah asserts. He indicated that it is the primary responsibility of the Medical Physicist to ensure safety in the use of radiation for healthcare in hospitals.

Mr. Acquah encouraged that each radiotherapy, diagnostic radiology and nuclear medicine centre in Ghana must make efforts to employ at least one Medical Physicist who will ensure that patients are diagnosed and treated with radiation in a safe manner. He stressed that cancer prevalence has been on steady increase worldwide, with less developed countries being the most affected. There is therefore the need for the government of Ghana to step up its efforts of establishing many more well equipped centres for the diagnosis and treatment cancer conditions.

