Survey of Health Physics Research and Education in the Netherlands

Background

A survey of health physics research and education in the Netherlands was conducted to investigate the Dutch Health Council’s concern that health physics research is declining, which might impair future radiation protection in the Netherlands.

Survey Setup

First, a search was conducted to identify researchers and organisations in the field of health physics. Second, a questionnaire was sent out with specific questions about number of personnel/students involved, trends in these data, research interests, and so on.

Survey Results

The questionnaire was sent to 90 persons, 50% of whom responded. However, these respondents produce about 75% of all scientific papers. The results show:

- 71% agree that health physics research is decreasing (Fig 1)
- 36% are involved in research (in diverse disciplines)
- Most in Dosimetry, Radiobiology and Radiology
- In total 87 FTE, 19% temporary, 19% supportive
- Most research groups are 0-5 FTE, none > 50 FTE
- Output: 127 reviewed and 154 other publications/year
- Average age 43.2 years (vs. 41.0 for all professions)
- Most groups have shrunk over last 5 years (Fig 2)

Consequences

(Dutch) issues that require health physics expertise:

- Increasing medical exposures
- Renewal and possible extension of nuclear facilities
- Indoor radon/thoron exposure
- Fundamental (radiobiological) research

The survey results suggest future manpower for the first issue, but not for the other ones.

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