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COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN RADIOLOGY: TREAT YOUR PATIENTS AND CARE FOR YOUR RADIOGRAPHERS

A DESIGNED PROJECTION FOR AN AWARE AND INNOVATIVE RADIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

INTRODUCTION

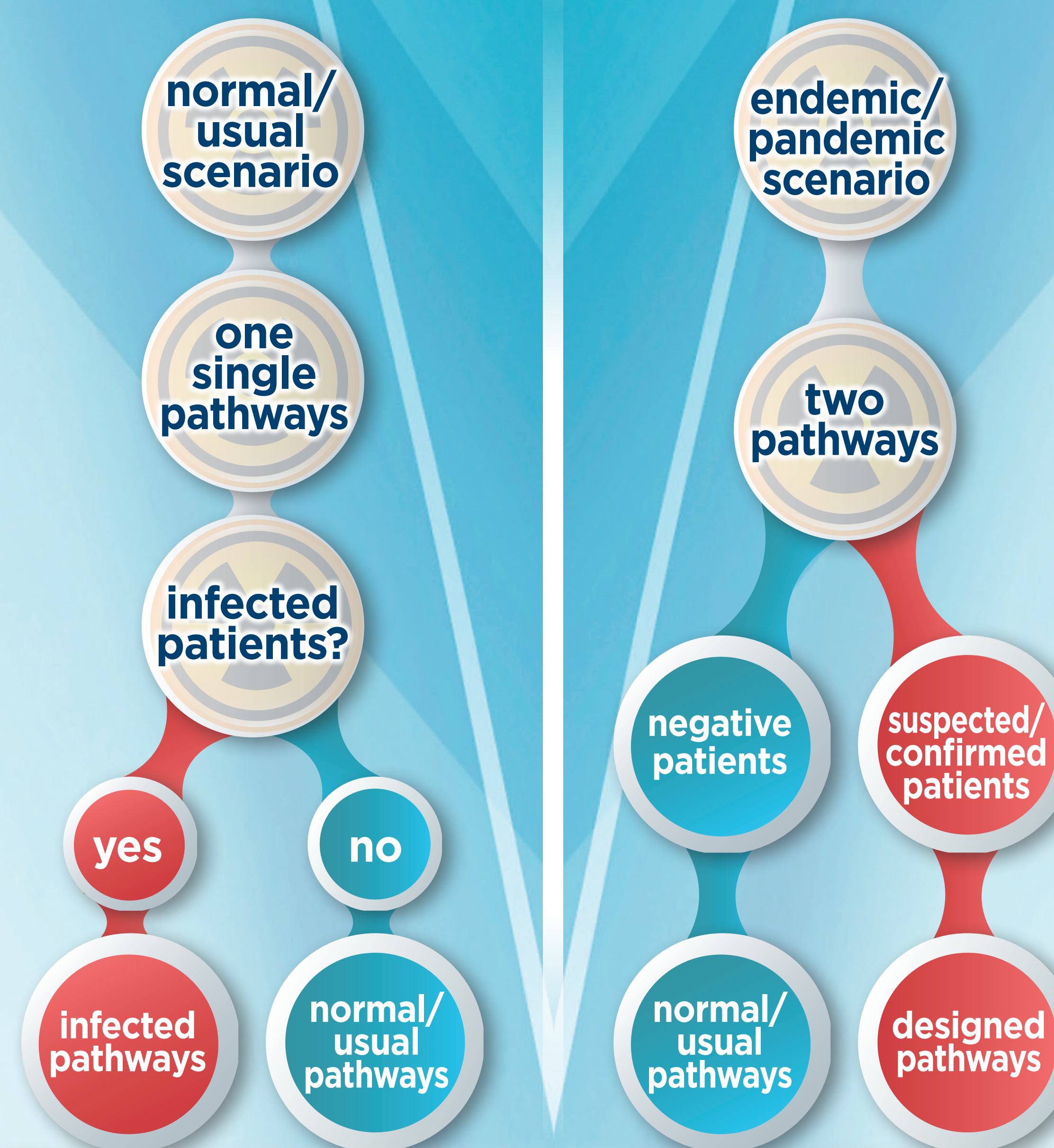
Since the COVID-19 outbreak, healthcare workers (HCWs) have faced an unprecedented and unpredictable situation on the frontlines.

Clear instructions are crucial to manage COVID-19 patients and protect HCWs.

Operating in safe conditions is extremely important to minimize the risk of contracting the disease. The aim of this document is to provide useful operative recommendations to radiographers who perform imaging services, such as chest X-ray (XR) and computed tomography (CT) scans, aimed at three kinds of patients: negative, suspected, or suffering from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome by Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).

The following information may undergo modifications and therefore can be adjusted according to individual department guidelines as the COVID-19 situation evolves.

TWO DIFFERENT PATHS INTO A RADIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



RISK MANAGEMENT & PATIENT SAFETY

- Surge capacity: the ability of a hospital to expand beyond its normal capacity and to meet an increased demand for clinical care;
- Adapted human resource management to guarantee adequate healthcare staff capacity;
- Accurate and timely communication to ensure informed decision-making, effective collaboration, public awareness and trust;
- An operational infection prevention and a control programme to minimize the risk of transmission of healthcare-associated infections to patients, hospital staff and visitors;
- An efficient and accurate triage system and a management strategy to ensure adequate treatment of COVID-19 patients;
- The ability of HCWs to recognize and immediately report suspected cases as the cornerstone of hospital-based COVID-19 surveillance.

1. Brief the whole team, even if not in detail;
2. Take deliberate action when under stress;
3. Lead openly and inclusively on occasion of rapidly changing scenarios;
4. Help staff who may be unfamiliar with some tasks;
5. Use checklists and aid memory and support tasks;
6. Encourage staff to express their opinion;
7. Recognize performance-limiting factors;
8. Debrief as a team to learn from experience;
9. Think about the wider healthcare team and the hospital as a system.

CONCLUSIONS

Taking care of patients and HCWs, such as radiographers, is fundamental to minimize the risk of disease transmission. Within a Radiology Department, different path layouts should be designed to separate ordinary from epidemic/pandemic healthcare situations.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic has been an unsettling experience for global health, healthcare systems, and also for patients and HCWs, we must not miss this chance to learn from firsthand experience to prevent failures and address their wider causes.

This requires stretching beyond simple diagnostic activities and sharing lessons taken from incidents, to ensure that such lessons are embedded in practice.

The distinction between passive learning and active learning is necessary in understanding why truly effective learning so often fails to take place.