Introduction 2

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It is hard to believe that X-rays were discovered only a century ago by Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen. In fact, few new discoveries attracted so much immediate attention. New applications developed rapidly, such as pneumoencephalography and angiography. Important reductions in radiation doses were achieved by the introduction of film-screen combinations.

During the 1970s and 1980s remarkable innovation, particularly computed imaging of soft tissues of the body using computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and ultrasound, revolutionized the field of radiology. As the sensitivity of the techniques improved, their use expanded into clinical practice. Nuclear medicine had been used for only a decade or two before introduction of CT.

Children who have a long life expectancy are likely to benefit most from these modern imaging techniques, especially MRI. In addition to its greater sensitivity, the lack of ionizing radiation promotes MRI as the imaging standard in paediatric patients.

Detection of paediatric endocrine tumours is often the ultimate test for these modern sophisticated imaging techniques. In paediatric patients with endocrinological disorders, the anatomical abnormality that is causing the disease is often small, or the exact site of the lesion is not known. Dr. J.F. Bonneville's lecture on CT and MRI of endocrine tumours of the sellar region and Dr. de Herder's lecture on radionuclide imaging of endocrine tumours give an excellent review of the state-of-the-art imaging of endocrine diseases in childhood.

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