



AsiaSafe: Cultivating a Safety Culture for Radiation in Diagnosis, Intervention, Therapy, and Beyond

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Take-home points

- AsiaSafe was conceived at the end of 2016, formed under the auspices of the Asian Oceanian Society of Radiology, and officially launched in July 2021.
- AsiaSafe serves to cultivate a safety culture for the use of radiation in diagnosis, intervention, and therapy, as well as for other applications including magnetic resonance and contrast safety.
- AsiaSafe has joined other global organizations in fostering and promoting the safe practice of radiation medicine and technology.
- AsiaSafers refers to the community of AsiaSafe supporters.

Keywords: AsiaSafe; AOSR; Radiation safety; Safety culture; MR safety; Contrast safety

AsiaSafe (<https://www.asiasafe.org/>; Fig. 1) is an initiative of the Asian Oceanian Society of Radiology [1] (AOSR) created to cultivate a safety culture for the use of radiation in diagnosis, intervention, therapy, and beyond.

AOSR spans countries with varying resources, needs, and

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challenges. Even though AOSR enrolled as a participating organization in Image Gently [2] in 2008, Asia-Oceania did not have a body such as LatinSafe [3], EuroSafe Imaging [4], Arab Safe [5], or AFROSAFE [6] in other parts of the world.

The AsiaSafe “idea” was conceived by Professor Kwan Hoong Ng who wrote an email in December 2016 to then AOSR president Yi Hong Chou and honorary secretary Evelyn Lai Ming Ho. This communication was followed by a more formal proposal during a leadership meeting of AOSR with the ASEAN Association of Radiology (AAR) in September 2017.

In 2018, a proposal update with an implementation plan and budget for the AsiaSafe website request was made to the AOSR Executive Council (EC). A prototype of the website was created; however, a rather long incubation period followed due to the daunting task of collating information from various AOSR members. The chosen target date for the AsiaSafe launch was the 2020 Asian Oceanian Congress of Radiology (AOCR) in Kuala Lumpur, but the outbreak of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic disrupted the planned launch. Nevertheless, the website was still brought online in 2020, and connections with sister organizations were established. AsiaSafe was officially launched in July 2021 at the virtual 19th AOCR (postponed from July 2020) hosted by the College of Radiology, Academy of Medicine of Malaysia, in Kuala Lumpur.

With AsiaSafe, the Asia-Oceania region has finally become part of the global initiative to establish a radiation safety culture. As part of this initiative, AsiaSafe joins the efforts of organizations worldwide involved in radiation safety and protection, working to promote awareness among health professionals for the appropriate use of radiation in medicine. AsiaSafe aims to provide recommendations and guidance on all aspects of protection from ionizing radiation as

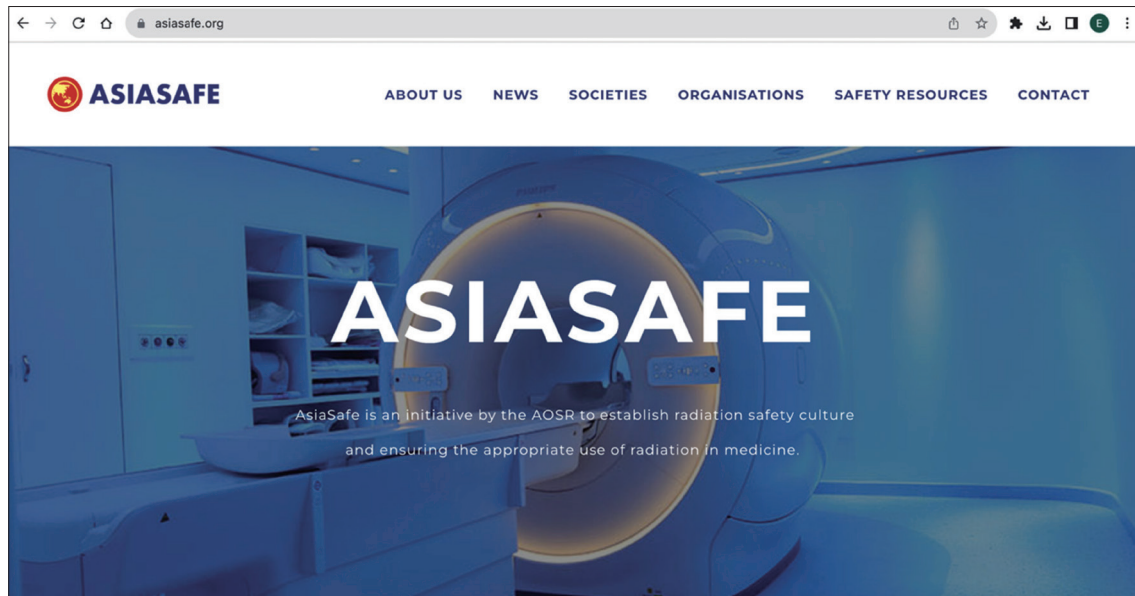


Fig. 1. The AsiaSafe homepage: <https://www.asiasafe.org/>.

well as share resources among members in Asia-Oceania. The AsiaSafe Chairperson represents AsiaSafe at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP), and International Society of Radiology Quality and Safety Alliance (ISRQSA).

At the outset, the AOSR EC felt that it was important to extend safety beyond ionizing radiation-related matters. Therefore, magnetic resonance (MR) and contrast safety were part of the AsiaSafe agenda from the beginning, although originally, the primary focus was on radiation safety. In the future, other realms of practice may be included under AsiaSafe. However, the key aims have remained essentially the same: to raise awareness, enhance practice, provide recommendations and guidance, and share resources.

The AsiaSafe website contains resources for regulations and codes on radiation protection, links for contrast media safety, related international publications, and affiliated organizations. The website also hosts AOSR member regulations and/or codes of practice, and links to their respective documents. AsiaSafe continues to appeal to AOSR members for updated documents or links so it can be the collective voice of Asia-Oceania. Diverse primary languages exist in the region and some of the documents are not in English. However, with the advent of large language models which can handle multiple languages and provide accurate translations through continuous fine-tuning, the possibility exists that in the future or near future, language differences

may be resolved.

Dissemination of messages, advisories, guidelines, and relevant publications was initially achieved through emails circulated from the AOSR secretariat, AOSR newsletters, and links on www.asiasafe.org. AOSR established social media platforms in July 2022, and subsequently, these platforms enhanced engagement with the AOSR membership in the region.

AsiaSafe was initially a fully autonomous body within AOSR until July 2021 when the Quality, Safety and Standards Committee (QSS) was revitalized. It is now part of QSS, but remains mostly autonomous, reporting directly to the AOSR Council and providing periodic reports to the ISRQSA, of which AsiaSafe is a member.

The first QSS committee (2021–2023) worked synergistically with AsiaSafe since most of its members were AsiaSafe committee members. During the 2023–2025 term, AsiaSafe will include a small committee of AsiaSafe members. AsiaSafe has been invited to participate and provide comments at the ICRP Task Group 108 Digital Workshops on “Optimization of Radiological Protection in Digital Radiology Techniques for Medical Imaging” in October 2022 and March 2023. It has also been invited to comment on the “Practical Aspects in Optimization of Radiological Protection in Digital Radiography, Fluoroscopy, and CT”. In September 2023, AsiaSafe participated in the Task Group 117 workshop on “Radiological protection in PET and PET/CT”. Comments were solicited from the AOSR

membership and collated for presentation where possible and appropriate.

Since July 2021, AsiaSafe has embarked on various activities. These include the MR Safety Survey, publicity campaigns, webinars in collaboration with the IAEA and the International Society of Radiographers and Radiological Technologists (ISRRT), and MR safety webinars. AsiaSafe webinars have elicited an encouraging global response and, as such, maximized the reach of AsiaSafe. Feedback has revealed a definite impact, although limited in some instances. When consent was obtained, webinars or specific talks were eventually published on the public AOSR YouTube ([youtube.com/@aosr](https://www.youtube.com/@aosr)) channel.

The 2021 MR Safety Survey sparked an MR Safety Campaign in India and encouraged many in that country to participate. The MR Safety Survey report was published on the AOSR website (<https://www.theaosr.org/>). MR Safety Ambassadors were appointed across the region from four member societies to increase the buy-in and provide an authoritative voice for messages in AOSR newsletters and social media.

AsiaSafe-QSS has participated in a number of courses, sessions, and symposia including the Celebrating International Day of Radiology (IDOR) on November 8, 2021 at the International Symposium on Cardiac Imaging and Beyond; the QSS, AOSR-Asian Society of Magnetic Resonance in Medicine MR Safety Course in May 2022; and the ESR-AOCR Conjoint session on “Quality and Safety” and “MR Safety” symposium at the 21st AOCR in February 2023. AsiaSafe also presented at the 2023 Korean Congress of Radiology track on “Radiation Safety: Effort and Perspective of International Organizations and National Societies.”

So, what is in the pipeline? AsiaSafe plans include: collaborating with the IAEA and other sister organizations to organize more webinars, increasing the dissemination of information and messages, enhancing the AsiaSafe website, and conducting an organ-shielding survey.

However, much more remains to be done, and AsiaSafe encourages everyone to join the AsiaSafers community.

Put Patients First, Be (Asia)Safe!

Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no potential conflicts of interest to disclose.

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