Comment on Reyes et al.: Myocardial perfusion scintigraphy in Europe 2007: a survey of the European Council of Nuclear Cardiology

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Dear Sir,

I read with great interest the recently published article entitled “Myocardial perfusion scintigraphy in Europe 2007: a survey of the European Council of Nuclear Cardiology” [1]. The article provides highly valuable data for those involved in health policy and also nuclear medicine authorities at large. However, I would like to add the following points:

1. Evaluating utilization of an imaging technique per se can be misleading sometimes. In fact, the utilization of each imaging technique should be assessed in the milieu of other competing imaging modalities [2]. For the case of myocardial perfusion scan, CT angiography and stress echocardiography are the main competing modalities [3]. There are a number of reports that shows utilization of these methods, and especially CT angiography, has increased recently [3]. In fact, it is the preference of the referring physicians to screen their patients pre- or post-intervention using CT angiography, not myocardial perfusion scintigraphy. Taking into consideration the volume of competing studies done each year, the 21% increase in the utilization of myocardial perfusion scintigraphy between 2005 and 2007 sounds more prominent.
2. Although I agree that service provision is becoming more homogeneous within and between countries, we still have to keep in mind however that financial issues, such as gross domestic product (GDP) of each country,

is an important contributing factor. Such a difference between Eastern and Western European countries cannot be overlooked easily. Therefore, comparing the utilization pattern of each country with the corresponding GDP can provide the readers with more detailed information and elucidate the socio-economic determinants of health technology utilization [4, 5].

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