Remember the cartoon Goofus and Gallant from Highlights? Introducing teleradiology’s version, Doofus and Valiant, with quite different approaches to their jobs.

Way back during my earliest medical experiences (as a pediatric patient), I was a reader of a magazine called “Highlights,” which was routinely available in waiting rooms alongside reading material for bored parents.

One of the features in the ‘zine was a comic strip about two lads, Goofus and Gallant. A demonstration of moral contrasts, it would regularly feature Goofus misbehaving in ways ranging from boorishness to downright stupidity, while Gallant always did the right things in the same situations.

I mention it only as a fond recollection, and underscore that in no way am I shamelessly parroting the concept for the caricatures of two teleradiologists, Dr. Doofus and Dr. Valiant. Any similarity is purely coincidental, of course.

I specify teleradiologists, rather than radiologists in general, because of the widely varying impressions others in our field seem to have regarding us telerad folks. I think the majority of negative sentiments spring from experiences with doctors like Doofus, whereas there are plenty (I daresay far more) like Valiant.

If I were to sum up how Dr. Valiant goes right while Dr. Doofus goes astray, it would be that Dr. Valiant approaches his work every bit as scrupulously, perhaps even more so, than he would have if working onsite rather than remotely. Doofus, on the other hand, is more lax, acting on the belief that nobody’s really watching him, so it’s okay to cut corners and generally take his role less seriously.

Drs. Doofus and Valiant, had I an ounce of artistic skill to draw them, could showcase their differences in monthly radiology journals for years on end. There’s a virtually endless supply of material:

“Valiant promptly calls in all critical findings. Doofus is pretty sure the clinician will read the reports.”
“Valiant carefully compares current studies with prior images. Doofus doesn’t even look at old reports.”
“Valiant pleasantly fields calls from clinicians regarding cases he’s read. Doofus is unavailable for discussion.”
“Valiant always has time to provide a consultation for other radiologists with challenging cases. Doofus is busy with his own workload.”
“Valiant only works when he’s on a reliable Internet connection, at his dedicated reading station. Doofus churns through extra cases on his low-resolution laptop whenever the mood strikes him.”

Given the almost complete lack of comic strip-type fun currently available in the radiology literature (with the notable exception of Dr’s own Dr. Chang), I think the Doofus and Valiant feature would catch on well. Fast-forward a few generations of residents, and D&V could become radiology household names. Who knows, big advertising bucks could follow: “Don’t be a Doofus — be Valiant, with GE equipment!” If anybody with a shred of artistic talent is interested, I’m willing to make it a team effort.

Disclosures:

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