

Imaging Gets Appy - Taking the Worry Away



One in seven patients has cancelled a hospital appointment because they are scared, according to a survey commissioned by Siemens. When it comes to imaging, more than 20 percent do not understand fully what an MRI scan is, while 42 percent admitted they were afraid of the MRI process. When patients turn up for their imaging appointments well-informed and prepared for the procedure everyone wins. Patients are less likely to cancel their appointment due to anxiety and, in the case of paediatric patients, may be less likely to need a general anaesthetic for an MRI exam. Two new tools are designed to inform and prepare patients for their imaging exams. An app that explains the MRI scan experience is designed to inform patients, allay their fears, and build their confidence. A UK hospital has developed a website just for children to explain what happens when they come in.

MRI Scan Experience App

The app, developed by Siemens, is aimed at adults and children to find out more before they come for an MRI scan. It includes a 360 degree virtual MRI scan (from inside and outside the scanner) and includes audio of the sound the scanner makes. Further information is available for both groups to explain more about how it works, what happens when you come in for a scan and the steps from referral to results. The app is available for [Apple](#) tablets, and [Android](#) tablets and phones.

Radiology for Kids website

To help children understand the process of visiting a hospital's radiology department for a scan, a web app has been created by the University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust in partnership with Siemens.

[Radiology for Kids](http://www.radiologyforkids.com) (www.radiologyforkids.com) guides the child in a 360 degree tour through the department, showing the rooms, explaining the process and highlighting hotspot areas. The design simulates gaming in that children get to choose a character to follow and have to click on hotspots to find out more. It also includes a virtual Radiographer who guides you through your journey - Kerry Ashcroft, Paediatric Lead Radiographer, Royal Stoke University Hospital, University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust, Stoke-on-Trent in the UK, who voiced the audio explanations.

The website explains four modalities - MRI, US, fluoroscopy and x-ray. Two levels are included, with links to further information for older children.

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Alice Turner, Principal Radiographer, Royal Stoke University Hospital, explained that the idea for an app came when they were reviewing their information leaflets. They decided that an app and a website would be more engaging for children. The guiding principles were that it must be fun and interactive. Patients will receive a link and QR code on their appointment letter to the website. The department plans to do a quantitative analysis of whether it makes a difference to appointment cancellations and duration, and they will review staff time taken to reassure a child coming in for an imaging exam. She said, "We developed a first phase with funding from the UHNM Charity and have since collaborated with Siemens to develop the web app further to give patients even more information and a better experience at what can be a daunting time. The interactive nature of the web app is engaging and allows children to experience the journey they would go through in hospital. The great thing about it is that any hospital across the world can use it to put their young patients' mind at ease and can even personalise it to reflect their own facility."

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