

Benefits of Imaging Exams Access Through Patient Portal



If patients are able to use an online portal to access their imaging exams, this may have major benefits for patients' quality of life and help reduce overall costs for both users and hospitals.

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A team at the National Institute for Infectious Diseases Radiology Unit in Rome, Italy, have analysed how often within a two-year period, from March 2017 to February 2019, its patients accessed outpatient radiology exams. They also compared socio-demographic characteristics of these users to the total of examinations performed. The results of this study, named the Lazio ESCAPE project, have been [published](#) in the *Journal of Digital Imaging*.

Overall, 9,068 exams, including MRI, X-ray and CT, were performed in 6,720 patients. The majority (77.3%) underwent a single radiological examination. In total, 446 exams were accessed through the portal – 190 (4.4%) in the first year, and 256 (5.4%) in the second year, with the most often accessed type being MRI (175 scans, 7.0%). Notably, patients residing in regions other than Rome, where the hospital is located, showed higher access rate.

The authors also looked at the cost of maintaining an online portal, which allows users to access these types of documentation. They estimated that if the access rate was 100%, the overall savings for both patients and the hospital could reach €255,808.28. Thus, they concluded, the use of a web portal could result in consistent economic benefits for the user (transportation cost, time lost), the hospital (cost of staff and storage space) and the environment.

It is noted that one of the causes for the low access rate might be insufficient computer literacy and lack of digital skills. The authors point out that in this regard Italy ranks 24th in the EU, and among European citizens aged 16-74 only 56% have basic computer knowledge. They believe that economic initiatives could facilitate the provision of widespread, web-based imaging access to patients.

Source: [Health Imaging](#)

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