
CT Scans and Radiation Exposure Reduced by Educational Intervention

The goal of the seminars was to safely decrease the amount of exposure to those with suspected pulmonary emboli in the emergency department by presenting the radiation exposure and accuracies among the CT pulmonary angiography (CTPA) exam and ventilation perfusion (V/Q) scanning.

The dose of radiation from CTPA is five times greater than that of V/Q, a fact many doctors did not know. Following the seminars, there was a decrease in CTPA exams and an increase in V/Q scanning, lowering total exposure by 20 percent.

An imaging algorithm was also established at the seminars in which emergency department patients with clinical suspicion of PE underwent chest radiography. If the results were normal, V/Q scanning was recommended; otherwise CTPA was recommended.

The radiology, nuclear medicine and emergency departments attended the educational intervention that led to the change in practice pattern over a period of a year. The study appears in the February issue of the American Journal of Roentgenology.

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