

## New Standards Pave the Way for Better Imaging



The new standards for diagnostic imaging, issued by the Joint Commission, aim to help prevent duplicate and unnecessary medical imaging and reduce potentially harmful exposure to radiation for patients who need different exams.

The new imaging standards focus primarily on the radiation dose index. While uncertainties remain about the long-term impact of imaging on patients, researchers agree it affects patients differently depending upon such factors as sensitivity to radiation, age, body parts being tested and absorption rates.

In issuing specific standards to help improve patient safety, the Joint Commission joins other healthcare organisations, including the American College of Radiology (ACR), that are releasing new quality-focused recommendations. These organisations also provide enhanced education tools and technologies to help physicians use diagnostic imaging to shed light on serious health conditions without exposing their patients to unintended risks.

Knowledge of a patient's previous imaging exams, according to the Joint Commission, helps prevent duplicate exams and further radiation exposure. It recommends considering a patient's age and recent imaging studies when deciding the most appropriate exam.

Hospitals may face some challenges in complying with these new guidelines from the Joint Commission. Compliance becomes difficult, for instance, when a patient is seen by multiple healthcare providers who are in different locations. Many hospitals keep a record of a patient's medical images, and they typically give the patient a CD of relevant images at the end of a visit. However, too often that CD will be damaged or rendered unreadable, and even if it works, it won't contain a complete story of the patient's health, including their medical imaging history, for the next provider.

Now cloud-based technology makes it easier for health providers to share and view medical images and reports in real time. A cloud-based medical image-sharing platform, for example, allows a physician who is not physically onsite to still view his patient's images using a mobile device. This not only prevents unnecessary rescans, it enhances collaboration between consulting care teams and promotes faster treatment times.

In order to more quickly adopt the new Joint Commission regulations, hospitals are widely turning to the cloud to make it easy to store, share, and access medical images between physicians and facilities.

"These new standards will, undoubtedly, improve the imaging industry by reducing duplicate scans and improving the delivery of patient care," says Karen Holzberger, vice president and general manager for diagnostics at Nuance Communications.

"As someone who has worked in healthcare technology for more than 20 years, I believe the combination of diagnostic imaging, evidence-based medicine and expert medical oversight that exists today will help physicians make more informed clinical decisions, and enable providers, big and small, to better manage radiation exposure and protect patients," she adds.

Source: [mHealth News](#)

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