

CT SCANS

The reasons diagnostic imaging with computed tomography scans has increased and the limited scientific knowledge of the effects of this increased radiation exposure on inducing cancer in patients have been widely discussed. Nevertheless, one cause for the increase in CT scans is often neglected: 39.

In the U.S., practicing physicians order diagnostic studies that they believe are appropriate. Radiologists, who are the experts in the advantages and disadvantages of different imaging modalities and are the ones that interpret the studies, have no ability to either reject or change them without permission from the ordering physician. Consequently, a certain amount of non-optimal and unneeded exams will be ordered. This generally occurs because of lack of communication with the ordering physician to optimize the diagnostic test (the American Board of Radiology has developed appropriateness criteria for diagnostic studies to address this issue). Sadly, it also occurs because in the current U.S. reimbursement structure, there is no financial incentive to cancel a non-indicated or non-optimized study.

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