

THE HCI SPOTLIGHT



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LIKE US ON FACEBOOK AND JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

Dear Colleague—

I had the opportunity to attend the ACC Legislative Forum in Washington DC in September. The meeting gave us the opportunity to hear from members of Congress as well as the Administration (CMS). The SGR dilemma is on everyone's radar and we were told that it would be fixed...but the specifics were lacking. Based on what I learned at the meeting I feel confident that we will not be hit with the entire cut but...there might be a small cut. There still seemed to be a lot of confusion regarding the new healthcare law's effect on how medicine is practiced. This uncertainty seems to be due not only to the numerous legal actions but confusion within the departments that have been tagged to enact the law. We did meet with many of our representatives and I encourage you to meet with your representative in their district office. We were told that this is where they really listen...take a patient with you to reinforce why it is important to tread carefully with regard to healthcare.

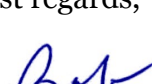
You will be seeing more and more regarding two issues, appropriate use guidelines and radiation. Some studies show that many that order the test are not following the published guidelines. HCI sites have been following these guidelines for years. Insurers are looking for any reason to reject testing...using guidelines helps reject the idea that middlemen need to be involved in deciding who gets the test. We can lower the amount of radiation by using products such as UltraSPECT and Astonish software which many HCI sites are doing. If you would like more information on these products please contact us to we can provide that information to you.

Answer to September's quiz question:

Test your knowledge. According to the AUC guidelines, is radionuclide imaging APPROPRIATE in this case?

- 62 year old woman
- Seeks cardiac risk assessment after friend has an MI
- Asymptomatic, no health complaints
- 15% 10 year CHD risk based on ATP III
- Equivocal ECG

Best regards,



Blue Cross to pay \$325,000 fine for cardiac test problems

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Delaware ordered to pay a \$325,000 fine for problems in how the company approved and paid for nuclear tests used to diagnose heart blockages. BCBS will work with the ACC on a pilot program designed to reduce inappropriate testing.

<http://www.delawareonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/201109131352/BUSINESS/110913032>

Organized Medicine Defends Top Pay for US Physicians

Several leaders of organized medicine have responded to a new article reporting that US physicians charge more and earn more than their international colleagues by saying that higher pay is necessary to draw the best candidates to the profession.

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/749561?src=emailthis>

Report Details Fraud and Abuse by Pharmaceutical Companies

Since 1996, \$12 billion has been recovered from pharmaceutical companies in the United States for legal cases stemming from fraud and abuse. 1996-2000: \$8 billion recovered, 2001-2005: \$3.9 billion recovered, 2006-2010: \$8.1 billion recovered. Off-label or fraudulent marketing and misbranding practices were charged in the majority of the cases.

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/749508?src=emailthis>

ASNC: Future of nuclear cardiology remains unknown

As the future model of health care reform is not yet set in stone, those working in nuclear cardiology must first get a grip on how to modify the current system to charge less per service rather than compromising care with less volume. This year's hit will be hospital-based rather than office-based however there has been a massive move to transfer cardiology procedures from the office to the hospital.

http://www.molecularimaging.net/index.php?option=com_articles&view=article&id=29462

Targeting physicians salaries is a poor strategy for health care costs

Reforming how doctors are paid should not be the ONLY piece to solve the health care cost puzzle. Tackling a problem this large requires shared sacrifice, from both patients and health professionals alike.

http://www.kevinmd.com/blog/2011/09/targeting-physician-salaries-poor-strategy-health-care-costs.html?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=twitterfeed

After RBM challenge, Del. requires Blue Cross to adopt appropriate use

The Delaware Insurance Commissioner has ordered BCBS of Delaware to adopt the ACC's FOCUS program, based on national medical society-developed appropriate use criteria. Appropriate use criteria programs using clinical decision support and education have proven effective and successful in driving quality care without compromising patient access.

http://www.cardiovascularbusiness.com/index.php?option=com_articles&view=article&id=29528

ASNC: Imaging Agent May Target LV Ablation Hot Spots

Using iodine-123-metaiodobenzylguanidine (MIBG) as the scintigraphic radiotracer, researchers found that regional heart-to-mediastinum (H/M) ratios, which is a measure of the functionality of sympathetic nerves, and tracer washout rates showed innervation variation within the LV myocardium.

<http://www.medpagetoday.com/MeetingCoverage/ASNC/28463>

ASNC: Age Alone May Put Symptom-Free People at Risk for Silent Ischemia

Traditional risk factors were predictive of silent ischemia in younger individuals, while age seemed to be the main predictor in those ages 74 and up, researchers found. Asymptomatic patients with no prior history of coronary artery disease (CAD), the prevalence of silent ischemia increased with increasing risk factors.

<http://www.medpagetoday.com/MeetingCoverage/ASNC/28451>

ASNC: Stress agents or exercise for nuclear imaging?

In the current era of nuclear stress testing, a major debate is whether pharmacological stress testing is comparable with exercise testing. Abbott offered that incorporating low-level exercise in patients undergoing pharmacologic stress testing can help improve outcomes. In fact, he said that it can reduce the side effects of these agents by 30 percent and can also improve diagnostic accuracy.

http://www.molecularimaging.net/index.php?option=com_articles&view=article&id=29467&division=mii

Study clouds picture on omega-3s and heart health

Danish researchers who analyzed the diets of nearly 3,300 people found that, in general, people who reported eating more fatty acids were no less likely over time to develop ischemic heart disease. However, women who ate the most omega-3 fatty acids, common in fish and in fish oil supplements, did appear to benefit.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/09/us-omega-3-heart-health-idUSTRE7885AK20110909>

ASNC: Guidelines for Stress SPECT Improve Outcomes

Adherence to the appropriateness criteria for stress SPECT myocardial perfusion imaging (MPI) can lead to better utilization and outcomes, but inappropriately ordered tests offer a less useful diagnostic yield. Of 266 SPECT MPI tests ordered in a three-month period, 19.9% were inappropriate.

<http://www.medpagetoday.com/MeetingCoverage/ASNC/28504>

Russian to launch compact collider

Russian designers have created a pilot model of a desktop laser collider which will be able to accelerate charged particles with greater speed. In medicine, this can be used for treating cancer tumors with proton beams. This laser can accelerate proton beams to hundreds of megaelectron volt.

<http://english.ruvr.ru/2011/09/19/56373005.html>

'Brain Fitness' Program Improves Memory

A combination of brain exercises and healthy lifestyle changes can improve memory performance in healthy elderly adults. 115 participants from 2 live-in retirement communities, those who underwent a new educational program (that included memory training, physical activity, stress reduction, and better diet) showed significant improvements on a variety of measures after just 6 weeks, including word recognition and recall.

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/749031?src=emailthis>

To remove your name from our mailing list or if you have questions or comments email us at info@heartcareimaging.com or call 561-746-6125