

Quality Assurance: Cornerstone of Improving Patient Care

*By Shephard Kosut, MD, EagleEye Radiology
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Dr. Shephard Kosut

An essential component of any successful radiology group is a clear and well-established Quality Assurance Program. Many regulatory agencies such as the American College of Radiology (ACR), the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health-

care Organizations (JCAHO), and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) have taken an active role in promoting patient care by addressing physician performance. All radiology groups committed to providing the best quality patient care must have a rigorous peer review system.

Radiologists, and physicians in general, are not perfect. Even the most seasoned radiologist is not immune to the occasional mistake. Errors in interpretation are an expected occurrence in daily practice. However, it is how those mistakes are addressed that establishes an environment of self-evaluation and promotes continuous improvement in patient care.

Peer review is currently the best method available in evaluating radiologist performance. The large number of cases interpreted in a busy radiology practice affords a wealth of data to analyze. Standard of care can be established by assessing the degree of agreement between

radiologists and is therefore an indirect measure of accuracy.

Peer review should not be adversarial. The process should be collegial and viewed as an opportunity for self-evaluation, education, and personal/professional development. Only by understanding how and why we make mistakes can we be expected to improve.

At EagleEye, our peer review process starts with a random quarterly review of cases for each radiologist. Discrepancies are noted as minor and not affecting patient care or major with the potential for impact. These cases are shared with the interpreting radiologist (and referring clinicians if necessary) and tracked over time. The data can be analyzed to reveal patterns in error frequency. Are there problems with a certain modality (CT, MRI, or Ultrasound)? Or issues within a subspecialty area (Neuroradiology or Musculoskeletal imaging)? If trends are detected, remediation or additional training can be tailored to ensure that future errors do not re-occur.

Open communication between radiologists remains the cornerstone of a successful peer review system. Differences in opinion regarding interpretation should be shared in a non-judgmental manner to avoid a punitive or defensive atmosphere. At EagleEye, our collaborative approach to quality assurance and patient care fosters a positive environment amongst our radiologists who are eager to share thoughts and opinions on individual cases.

EagleEye Radiology strives to be a leader in quality imaging interpretation. Our peer review process is a testament to our dedication to patient care. By continuously reviewing the

accuracy of our radiologists and providing a strong framework for education, self-improvement, and professional development, the end result is optimized patient care.

For more information on how EagleEye Radiology can support your radiology department's compliance with this new law, please visit www.eerad.com or email info@eerad.com.

New EagleEye Quality Assurance Director is Steward for Continuous Improvement

*By Erlinda A. Doherty,
EagleEye Radiology Marketing Director*

After separating from the Army in the Summer of 2011, Dr. Kosut officially assumed the role as EagleEye Radiology's Director of Quality Assurance. In this important position, Dr. Kosut is responsible for managing EagleEye's robust peer review process and ensuring that radiologists are providing accurate, high quality interpretations. Fostering and maintaining a collegial atmosphere amongst EagleEye's team is a key element in Dr. Kosut's approach to this critical function.

"Our radiologists are eager to share their thoughts and opinions on cases," stated Dr. Kosut. "The volume of interpretations we provide gives us a large pool of data from which we can analyze discrepancies and collaborate on ways to address these differences."

Prior to joining EagleEye, Dr. Kosut served 9 years in the U.S. Army and last worked as a Staff Radiologist and the Associate Program Director for the Radiology Residency Program at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, one of the busiest military medical centers in the country. He completed his residency at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC during which time he was elected Chief Resident, received several awards, and collaborated on numerous publications.

Promoting quality patient care at EagleEye is a rigorous process that Dr. Kosut takes seriously. Regulatory agencies such as the American College of Radiology and the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations have taken an active role in assessing physician performance and radiology groups must adhere to these strict standards.

"Even the most experienced radiologist can make an error, and we have established an environment where we can continuously improve our skills," said Dr. Kosut. "Our stringent process demonstrates our dedication to our clients and our efforts to uphold the highest standards of patient care."

To find out how EagleEye Radiology can optimize your patient care, please contact info@eerad.com or visit www.eerad.com.