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New Study Finds Direct Radiography Systems Are Three to Four Times Faster Than Computed Radiography Systems

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A time and motion productivity study to be published by Mount Auburn Hospital, a community-teaching hospital affiliated with Harvard Medical School, found that Hologic's Direct Radiography® (DR) systems are three to four times faster than Computed Radiography (CR) systems for conventional projection radiography. Mount Auburn is one of the first hospitals in North America to install a Direct Radiography® system and one of the first hospitals to directly compare the productivity of the new system with a conventional computed radiography system. The difference in productivity is expected to significantly improve the bottom line of Mount Auburn's imaging department.

Dean DeMaster, Radiology Manager, and his colleagues at Mount Auburn Hospital, Cambridge, MA, compared the imaging productivity of an x-ray system upgraded to run with a Hologic DirectRay® detector with an Agfa Corp. Compact 70 Computed Radiography system. The hospital compared actual patient exam time from when the patient first entered the room to be imaged until the image was accepted and available for diagnosis for 75 consecutive cases on each system. A full range of general radiography exams were included in the study with each exam broken down into defined steps, and each step timed using a stopwatch by a single observer. The average times for each step for each view and for each patient were then calculated.

According to DeMaster, the Direct Radiography® system was found to be four times faster than the Computed Radiography system for a typical PA and lateral chest exam and DR was more than three times faster than CR across the full range of general radiography exams included in the study. For a simple two-view chest exam, it took on average 2.5 minutes to complete an exam with the Direct Radiography system versus an average of 9.9 minutes per patient for a computed radiography exam.

The Mount Auburn productivity study also revealed that the average time for complete study images to be sent for review following the last exposure was about 16 seconds with the Direct Radiography system compared to nearly six minutes for the computed radiography system. Completed DR exams were available for the radiologists to review more than 20 times faster than CR exams once the last exposure was finished. In addition, the study disclosed that the technologist spent under one minute for DR and nearly eight minutes for CR on tasks other than positioning the patient and taking exposures, which contributed to the significantly better DR productivity. Since the DirectRay® detector captures and converts an x-ray image into digital format within seconds of the exposure, DeMaster concludes that the technologist can quickly preview each digitized image for quality assurance prior to completion of the exam procedure.

According to Jay Stein, Hologic, Inc. Senior Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, it is well documented that computed radiography systems are roughly 30% faster than conventional screen-film systems across a full range of general radiography exams. Therefore, based on the Mount Auburn productivity study, it can be extrapolated that Direct Radiography® systems are significantly faster than both screen-film and computed radiography systems.

DeMaster expects that the bottom line benefits of the new generation of Direct Radiography® systems will include more expedient patient exam flow, fewer repeat exams, increased room use, increased staff and equipment productivity, and ultimately faster results translating into better patient care.

The Mount Auburn Hospital is a community-teaching hospital affiliated with Harvard Medical School and is a member of CareGroup. Its staff of 500 physicians cares for approximately 11,000 inpatients and 255,000 outpatients annually. Mount Auburn is a leading provider of advanced, specialized care in areas such as cardiology, cardiac surgery, oncology, orthopedics, interventional radiology, endovascular stent grafts and vascular surgery.

Based in Bedford, Massachusetts, Hologic, Inc. (NASDAQ: HOLX) develops, manufactures, markets, and services a family of x-ray image capture systems optimized for DirectRay® technology in addition to a family of proprietary x-ray and ultrasound bone densitometer systems, and a family of mini C-arm systems through its Fluoroscan subsidiary. (www.hologic.com).

SOURCE: Hologic, Inc.

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