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Radiation Protection Strategies in Diagnostic Imaging: A Comprehensive Review

Arwa Ayed M Alanazi[1], Othman Ahmed Othman Mahdi[2], Muhannad Abdullah Taher Almulla[3], Fahad Bakheet Alanazi[4], Ayez Abdulmuhyi Owaidh Almutairi[5], Saad Ammar Almutairi[6], Reema Meshal Alkahtani[7], Abeer Abdullah ALJamaan[8], Alanoud Fahad Al Shibani[9], Fatima saeed Alahmari[10], Abdulrahman Saad Alshahrani[11], Muhannad Jaber Shuraym[12], Sattam Mansour Abulkhair[13], Marzog Awwad Alotaibi[14], Adel Atgan Borek Alotaibi[15]

1. Radiology specialist, Aldiriyah Hospital, Ministry of Health, Kingdom of Saudi. Araalanazi@moh.gov.sa
2. X-ray Radioligy, Jazan health cluster, Ministry Of Health, Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia. omahdi@moh.gov.sa
3. Radiology Technologist, King Fahad Hospital In Hofuf, Ministry of Health, kingdom of Saudi Arabia. muhsf7@gmail.com
4. Radially Technician, Diriyah Hospital, Ministry of Health, kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Falnazi@moh.gov.sa
5. Radiological Technology, Al-Iman General Hospital, Ministry of Health, kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Dr.6g@hotmail.com
6. X-ray Technician, Al-iman General Hospital, Ministry of Health, kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Saadamaar2137@gmail.com
7. X- ray Technician, Al-Shifa 1 Health Center, Ministry of Health, kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Reefo2009@hotmail.com
8. Radiological Specialist, King Salman Hospital, Ministry of Health, kingdom of Saudi Arabia. abc_abcu@yahoo.com
9. Ultrasound Technician, King Salman Hospital, Ministry of Health, kingdom of Saudi Arabia. ashibani@moh.gov.sa
10. Ultrasound Technician, King Salman Hospital, Ministry of Health, kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Fs.ahmari2020@gmail.com
11. Specialist Radiological Technology, Prince mohamed bin Abdulaziz hospital in Riyadh, Ministry of Health, kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Aalshahrani229@moh.med.sa
12. Radiographer in Cath Lab, Prince Mohammed Bin Abdulaziz, Ministry of Health, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. m.j.s.924.a@gmail.com
13. Radiology Technician, Al-Fawaz Health Center, Ministry of Health, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. sabulkhair@moh.gov.sa
14. Radiology Technician, Al-Fawaz Health Center, Ministry of Health, kingdom of Saudi Arabia. ma.511511@hotmail.com
15. X-ray Technician, Rifai Jamsh Hospital, Ministry of Health, kingdom of Saudi Arabia. adatalotaibi@moh.gov.sa

ABSTRACT

Radiation exposure in medical imaging is a critical concern, particularly in pediatric care, where patients are more susceptible to its biological effects. This review examines strategies to manage and minimize radiation exposure across various stakeholders, including healthcare personnel, other staff, and patients. Key approaches include optimizing imaging protocols, employing advanced technologies, and implementing effective training programs. Techniques such as shielding, distance management, dose monitoring, and protocol standardization are discussed. Emphasis is placed on balancing diagnostic accuracy with radiation safety, acknowledging that achieving acceptable image quality often supersedes the pursuit of optimal quality. Additionally, efforts like the Image Gently™ campaign exemplify collaborative initiatives aimed at reducing unnecessary exposure in pediatric imaging. This review underscores the importance of both operational and technical strategies to ensure patient and personnel safety without compromising diagnostic efficacy.

KEYWORDS: Radiation protection, Radiation safety, Diagnostic Imaging, Ionizing Radiation, Radiation dose Optimization.

1. Introduction

One of the most significant advancements in medicine was the discovery of X-rays. Since then, the use of X-rays in imaging has expanded to include techniques such as fluoroscopy, angiography, and CT scans. While these imaging modalities continue to offer substantial benefits in diagnosing pediatric conditions, they are not without associated risks. A principal concern with these modalities that utilize ionizing radiation pertains to the potential biological effects of radiation exposure, some of which were identified within months of the discovery of X-rays. Ultimately, the value of any imaging modality lies in balancing its diagnostic benefits against the risks it poses. To shift this balance favourably towards benefits, it is essential to understand and implement measures that protect individuals from radiation exposure.

Several important considerations arise in the context of radiation protection. First, the prevailing assumption is that there is no level of radiation exposure that can be deemed completely safe, which aligns with the linear no-threshold (LNT) model. Second, diagnostic imaging constitutes most radiological practices. At the levels of exposure typical in diagnostic imaging, the associated risks are primarily stochastic, relating to the potential for cancer development. Consequently, deterministic effects, which are more relevant to interventional procedures, will not be addressed in this discussion. Third, radiation protection encompasses both patients and healthcare professionals. While ensuring the safety of both groups is critical in medical imaging, this discussion focuses primarily on radiation protection strategies for pediatric patients. Moreover, the emphasis will be on strategies that radiologists can directly implement. Although partnerships between science and industry can advance technologies to reduce radiation doses, a more pragmatic approach focusing on directly applicable information is deemed more suitable for this context.

It is also crucial to recognize that radiation protection operates under the assumption that achieving adequate diagnostic imaging quality is the ultimate objective. Radiology professionals must consider the concept of acceptable image quality rather than striving for optimal image quality in all circumstances. The practice of radiation protection is influenced by individual expertise, established standards, and the availability of resources.

All radiology personnel share a collective responsibility to address radiation safety issues. While recent attention has centered on CT examinations, this responsibility extends to all imaging procedures involving radiation exposure to patients. Effective and efficient radiation safety requires collective acknowledgment and action from technologists, radiologists, physicists, engineers, epidemiologists, radiation biologists, regulatory agencies, policymakers, industry representatives, and national organizations. Finally, it is important to note that imaging procedures are sometimes conducted by professionals who are not radiologists. For instance, urologists may perform fluoroscopy, and cardiologists may conduct CT examinations. While general radiation protection principles, including appropriate referrals and usage, apply to these practitioners as well (Levin et al., 2008), regulating these groups lies outside the purview of the radiology profession and is beyond the scope of this discussion. Consequently, the following material will focus on an operational, rather than technical, approach to minimizing radiation exposure during diagnostic imaging that involves ionizing radiation in pediatric patients.

Radiation Management Goals

There are two primary objectives in managing radiation exposure. The first objective involves developing appropriate imaging algorithms that minimize patient exposure to radiation. This entails ensuring that the imaging modality provides value in both the collective assessment of a disorder and individual diagnostic benefit. The second goal, once imaging is deemed necessary, is to apply the correct technique. These objectives are relevant to radiography, fluoroscopy/angiography, and CT. International recognition has highlighted that a significant proportion of medical imaging may be conducted for questionable indications, with some practices in the United States driven primarily by defensive medicine (Studdert et al., 2005). With the increasing focus on evidence-based medicine and outcome assessments, radiologists are well-positioned to contribute to the development of appropriate imaging algorithms.

Although a detailed discussion of the first goal, ensuring appropriateness, is beyond the scope of this review, some initiatives in this area warrant mention. Efforts include the work of organizations such as the American College of Radiology (ACR), which provides Appropriateness Criteria™ guidelines, standards, and modality accreditation. Additionally, the European Commission has disseminated information on radiation protection (Radiology (ESR), 2015). Tools like electronic physician order entry systems can facilitate the selection of appropriate imaging studies. Educational initiatives such as the Image Gently™ campaign, organized by the Alliance for Radiation Safety in Pediatric Imaging, offer guidelines for performing CT and are expanding their focus to other areas of pediatric imaging over the coming years. The second goal, which pertains to employing appropriate pediatric techniques and protocols, will be the focus of the subsequent discussion.

Radiobiological effects have been recently reviewed (Slovis et al., 2008). Specific considerations are necessary when addressing radiation risks in pediatric patients. This population is notably more sensitive to radiation effects, with susceptibility estimated to be 2–10 times higher than adults, though more likely within the range of

2–5 times. This increased vulnerability is partly due to the extended lifetime during which radiation-related stochastic effects may manifest. Furthermore, the same radiation dose, such as that from CT scans, results in a relatively higher dose in children. Pediatric techniques may also be less familiar to many radiologists, potentially leading to the use of higher doses than required, such as prolonged fluoroscopy times, by practitioners who are less proficient. Additionally, when technologists unfamiliar with specialized pediatric strategies conduct procedures like radiography, it can result in suboptimal image quality, necessitating repeat examinations and resulting in unnecessary radiation exposure.

In summary, imaging modalities that utilize ionizing radiation provide critical diagnostic information. However, controlling radiation doses is vital, especially for protecting children. This involves avoiding unnecessary examinations and optimizing techniques for justified imaging. Modalities such as ultrasound (US) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), which do not involve ionizing radiation, should always be considered if they provide adequate diagnostic information.

General Technical Considerations

Proper patient preparation is a critical component of radiation management. For example, using sedation during CT scans reduces the risk of motion artifacts and the associated loss of diagnostic information. Similarly, employing appropriate restraints during fluoroscopy or radiography helps ensure high-quality diagnostic images with minimal radiation exposure. Continuous communication between the radiologist and technologist during fluoroscopy enhances coordination, particularly for the precise timing of contrast medium administration and fluoroscopic evaluation. Furthermore, all imaging equipment must undergo rigorous evaluation during installation and periodic testing by qualified experts, such as physicists, to ensure optimal performance.

Radiation Management for Radiography

Radiography remains the most performed imaging procedure in children. Although the radiation dose involved is generally lower compared to fluoroscopy/angiography and CT, attention to detail remains essential. With radiographic imaging increasingly transitioning to digital technology, film-screen technology will not be discussed. Techniques for minimizing radiation exposure in pediatric radiography include beam filtration (to reduce the radiation dose deposited in tissues rather than reaching detectors), the use of pediatric shielding, appropriate restraints, when necessary, development of size-appropriate mA and kVp algorithms, documentation of exposures (a practice recently emphasized), and recording dose indices (e.g., in medical records). Requirements for patient-specific documentation vary, especially internationally. Protocols should explicitly define projections and collimation, and relevant guidelines can be found through resources such as the ACR guidelines and technical standards.

Despite established guidelines, pediatric radiographic techniques and radiation exposure levels exhibit considerable variation (Cook et al., 2001; Hintenlang et al., 2002). For instance, patient immobilization strategies may be inadequate or result in excessive radiation exposure. A study found that 45% of examinations in nonpediatric centers included the hands of individuals holding the child, and nearly one-third of examinations were inadequately collimated (Cook et al., 2001). This same study observed up to a four-fold difference in radiation doses for radiographs. Hintenlang et al. also reported substantial variability in effective doses for pediatric chest radiography (Hintenlang et al., 2002), while Cook et al. documented a 75-fold difference for lumbar spine evaluations (Cook et al., 2001). As with fluoroscopy, the radiographic beam should be precisely collimated. However, a challenge in quality assurance with digital technology arises because excessively wide collimation can be manually adjusted (shuttered) in the final image for interpretation in PACS, masking errors.

Beam filtration in pediatric radiography often differs from adult protocols, incorporating materials such as aluminum or copper layers and adjustments to both peak kilovoltage and tube current. Current computed radiography (CR) and digital radiography (DR) protocols should ideally be developed in collaboration with application specialists during equipment installation. A follow-up review after several weeks or months of use is beneficial to address emerging issues and refine CR and DR protocols. Shielding patients during imaging procedures is practiced inconsistently. While shielding effectively eliminates external exposure beneath the shield, it does not reduce internal scatter, which is most significant near the area of exposure. Regardless of whether one adheres to the principle that even minor reductions in external radiation are meaningful, shielding remains valuable. It may reassure parents or caregivers by demonstrating meticulous attention to the child's welfare.

Digital radiography was initially celebrated as a technological advancement promising improved diagnostic performance due to its broader latitude, which makes it less sensitive to over- and under-exposure, as well as a reduction in the number of retakes. However, it has not been universally acknowledged that this technology has led to a significant reduction in dose overall. One reason for this issue could be that overexposure provides sufficient photon flux to create an image. Although such images remain diagnostically useful, they may involve an excessive radiation dose (Don, 2004).

An essential consideration for any imaging modality employing ionizing radiation is the ability to assess exposure. Accurately determining the actual patient dose during clinical imaging is effectively impossible. Nevertheless, exposure estimations or indices are available. These include the dose area product (DAP) or kerma area product (KAP), typically measured at the collimator (e.g., in $mGy \cdot cm^2$), surface dose, or conversions to skin-absorbed dose. Except for fluoroscopy and angiography where DAP/KAP are more commonly used, these metrics are not practical for routine clinical radiography. Moreover, the exposure indices provided by major digital systems lack straightforward annotations that can be easily interpreted by users (Willis, 2004). The provision of dose metrics is as critical for radiography as it is for fluoroscopy and computed tomography (CT), as it enables technique review and improvement and serves as a basis for developing electronic systems to monitor patient exposure (Birnbaum, 2008).

Radiation Management for Fluoroscopy and Angiography

Fluoroscopy and angiography can be addressed collectively. Among imaging modalities utilizing ionizing radiation in children, routine fluoroscopic examinations are second only to CT in terms of overall dose, with angiography potentially exceeding CT during interventional procedures. When possible, alternative techniques that avoid ionizing radiation should be prioritized. For instance, ultrasound (US) can assess diaphragm motion as an alternative to fluoroscopy. Similarly, US can evaluate potential intussusception and guide its reduction, minimizing unnecessary fluoroscopic procedures (Bai et al., 2006). Additionally, magnetic resonance (MR) enterography is increasingly valuable for assessing conditions like inflammatory bowel disease, which might otherwise involve extensive fluoroscopic examinations and consequently higher radiation doses (Gaca et al., 2008; Paolantonio et al., 2009). It is vital to explore and utilize non-ionizing techniques for such patient populations.

Strategies for managing fluoroscopic doses include minimizing radiation exposure time, which is arguably the most effective approach. Achieving this requires a thorough review of prior examinations and a comprehensive understanding of the medical record to ensure adequate diagnostic information with minimal exposure. Uncertainties regarding diagnostic objectives should be addressed through communication with the referring clinician or service. In many cases, targeted fluoroscopic evaluations may suffice instead of comprehensive procedures. Efforts should also focus on reducing fluoroscopic exposure in a single projection, which has the added benefit of enhancing anatomical evaluation.

Fluoroscopy should only be activated when obtaining dynamic information. For instance, activating fluoroscopy solely for localizing an area of interest, including setting collimation, is inappropriate. The use of magnification should be limited, and the image intensifier positioned as close to the patient as reasonably possible. A 10 cm air gap compared to no gap results in a 38% increase in dose. Maximizing the source-to-surface distance (SSD) is equally important. Default settings should prioritize the lowest acceptable image quality (lower photon flux), with adjustments made based on clinical requirements. Fluoroscopy time indicators should be utilized, with warnings triggered at intervals appropriate for pediatric examinations, such as every 1–3 minutes.

Several advances in fluoroscopic technology, including pulsed fluoroscopy (with frame rates as low as two frames per second), grid-controlled pulsed fluoroscopy, cine recording, last-image hold, last-image archive, and enhanced collimation options, reduce the need for continuous fluoroscopy during collimation. These innovations have been extensively reviewed. As in radiography, dose indices such as DAP should be recorded and archived alongside patient images.

Using grids during fluoroscopy generally increases the dose significantly. However, some newer technologies allow more liberal use of grids with only nominal dose increases while markedly enhancing image quality. The extent of dose increase depends on the specific equipment type and age. It is advisable to consult with application specialists, physicists, or engineers associated with the equipment vendor for guidance. Like radiography, shielding in fluoroscopy should be considered.

Although shielding's contribution to dose reduction in properly conducted examinations is likely minimal, it remains a prudent practice.

Radiation Management and CT

Computed tomography (CT) delivers the highest radiation dose per examination among imaging modalities that utilize ionizing radiation. A recent study by Mettler et al. revealed that CT, often combined with cardiac scintigraphy, contributes significantly more to population radiation exposure than previously recognized (Mettler et al., 2000). Medical imaging, with CT being the primary contributor, accounts for nearly 50% of the total radiation exposure received by the U.S. population. The utilization of CT has continued to grow, partly due to its ability to provide highly valuable diagnostic information in certain cases, but also for reasons not necessarily grounded in scientific evidence. These include usage by non-radiologists and marketing influences, such as promoting practices based on the availability of the latest CT technology. Currently, up to 65 million CT examinations are conducted annually in the U.S. (Linton et al., 2003), representing most CT scans performed globally. Approximately 11% of these are performed on children (Mettler et al., 2000), indicating that pediatric patients are not exempt from significant CT usage. Effective radiation management for CT requires a dual strategy: avoiding unnecessary examinations and employing appropriate techniques when imaging is necessary.

Adjustments in CT protocols should consider the organs or regions scanned and the specific clinical indications. High-contrast studies, such as chest CT, skeletal CT, and CT angiography, can often be performed using relatively low kilovoltage peak (kVp) and milliampere (mA) settings. These regions naturally exhibit high contrast (e.g., lung parenchyma, bone, or contrast-enhanced vasculature), allowing for greater noise tolerance. Multiphase examinations should be avoided whenever possible. In practice, less than 5% of body multidetector CT (MDCT) examinations necessitate more than one phase. When multiphase imaging is required, technical parameters should be adapted to the specific needs. For instance, detecting calcifications may require very low mA, which can be used for pre-contrast imaging. Similarly, for delayed evaluations of the genitourinary system to assess for extravasation, lower settings can be applied due to the high attenuation of excreted contrast medium. Adequate patient preparation is another critical aspect of CT radiation protection, including the consideration of sedation and repositioning external devices that might cause artifacts.

Individual scan parameters should be tailored to the specific indication. For example, lower tube current may suffice for follow-up assessments of potential abscesses compared to the initial evaluation. Similarly, detecting renal calculi (Karmazyn et al., 2009; Paulson et al., 2008) or monitoring complicated lung infections can be performed at reduced tube current. Adjustments should also account for the child's size, with guidelines for pediatric MDCT specifying modifications to mA, kVp, and pitch based on body size (Frush, 2008).

Newer dose-management technologies include tube current modulation, which can reduce radiation doses in pediatric imaging by up to 45% (Greess et al., 2004).

However, understanding the specifics of the technology is crucial, as variations exist between manufacturers (Kalra et al., 2004; McCollough et al., 2006). In some cases, improper use of modulation may result in higher radiation doses. Surface modulation is the latest innovation, allowing for reduced tube current over radiosensitive regions such as the breasts, thyroid, or eyes while maintaining higher tube current elsewhere. While this method holds promise, its effects on image quality and actual dose reduction require further evaluation. Advances in detector efficiency are also contributing to dose reductions for pediatric imaging. Another approach to dose reduction in CT is the use of in-plane shielding, which involves shielding organs or structures within the scanned region. Studies have shown that this technique reduces doses to surface structures like the breasts by 25–60% in both adults and children (Coursey et al., 2008; Fricke et al., 2003; Hopper et al., 1997). However, there is debate about the comparative efficacy of shielding versus simple tube current reduction (Geleijns et al., 2006). Despite this, in-plane shielding has become increasingly common in the U.S. for both pediatric and adult patients.

The Alliance for Radiation Safety in Pediatric Imaging has spearheaded the Image Gently™ campaign, which provides information about the risks of radiation from CT in children and offers guidelines for designing both body and neuro-CT protocols (Goske et al., 2008). The campaign aims to educate radiologists and other healthcare providers, particularly those in community practices who may not be well-versed in pediatric CT imaging techniques. While the campaign's long-term impact remains to be seen, it has garnered significant support nationally and internationally, with endorsements from nearly 35 organizations. CT protocol guidelines from the campaign have been downloaded thousands of times, reflecting widespread interest and adoption.

Strategies to Minimize Exposure to Health Care Personnel

Minimizing radiation exposure for health care personnel is guided by five primary strategies:

1. Minimizing time spent near a radiation source
2. Maximizing distance from a radiation source
3. Using effective shielding
4. Controlling contamination
5. Providing training and education for personnel

Reducing the time spent near a radiation source is critical for those required to work in proximity. This can be achieved by thoroughly understanding the task involving the radiation source, preparing for the procedure in advance, and ensuring the necessary equipment is readily available beforehand.

The intensity of radiation exposure from a small source decrease inversely with the square of the distance from the source. Thus, increasing the distance from the radiation source significantly lowers the dose rate. However, it is important to note that larger sources of radiation, such as a flood source used to calibrate a gamma camera, do not follow the inverse square law when near the source. Understanding the relationship between distance and radiation exposure rate is essential for healthcare personnel to effectively reduce their overall exposure.

Radiation shielding is predominantly designed to reduce exposure from diagnostic x-rays, which are the most used and portable imaging modality. Effective shielding must account for three primary sources of radiation:

- Primary radiation, the x-rays emitted directly from the x-ray-generating machine.

- Leakage radiation, which consists of all radiation emanating from the x-ray housing other than the intended beam. Leakage radiation often possesses high energy due to the materials it penetrates within the housing.

- Scatter radiation generated when the x-ray beam interacts with the patient, tabletop, or room shielding materials.

Personal shielding devices, such as lead aprons, are highly effective in minimizing exposure and can be supplemented with thyroid shields and leaded glasses to protect the thyroid gland and eyes. The effectiveness of lead shielding is influenced by its thickness. For instance, a lead thickness of 0.25 mm can attenuate 90% of scatter radiation, while doubling the thickness increases attenuation to 99%, though it also significantly increases the weight of the shield, making it impractical for prolonged use.

Fluoroscopic procedures present another common source of radiation exposure for healthcare personnel. In such settings, the duration of exposure to fluoroscopic contrast is often monitored using an audible signal that activates every five minutes. This allows for personnel shifts if procedures exceed the expected duration.

A frequent misconception is that contamination poses an immediate threat to public health. Contamination is best defined as the uncontrolled release of low-level radioactive material. Unlike other hazardous materials, such as chemicals or biological agents, even very low levels of radioactive contamination can be detected. Although dose rates in a contaminated area are typically low requiring extended exposure times to match the dose of a single x-ray the primary concern is the potential for ingestion or inhalation of radioactive material, which could concentrate within the body and result in cumulative exposure over time.

Regulatory requirements focus on managing contamination to prevent personnel from exceeding permissible radiation exposure limits. Contaminated areas must be clearly marked with signs reading “Caution: Contaminated Area” and contained to prevent uncontrolled spread. Facilities typically define contamination with beta-emitting or gamma-emitting materials as levels of radioactive material undergoing 250 to 1,000 nuclear transformations (decays) per minute within an area of 100 cm^2. For perspective, a banana, containing approximately 475 mg of potassium with about 56 µg of radioactive potassium-40, emits around 900 decays per minute. If evenly distributed over a 100 cm^2 area, such a banana would be considered “contaminated.”

Monitoring and preventing contamination in healthcare environments rely on universal precautions, like those used to reduce exposure to infectious pathogens.

Routine monitoring is conducted using daily Geiger-Müller (GM) surveys and weekly wipe tests. Unlike pathogen monitoring, radioactive contamination can be detected instantly and in very small amounts. Additionally, radioactive contamination, unlike infectious agents, does not multiply or spread and primarily represents an internal hazard due to its finite half-life.

Lastly, comprehensive training and education of personnel are paramount in minimizing radiation exposure. Training programs should emphasize the risks and benefits of ionizing radiation, ensuring proper handling of materials and equipment to prevent unnecessary exposure. Personnel should also be trained to respond effectively in emergencies or instances of improper radiation use. Well-structured educational programs enable rapid onboarding of new staff, minimizing the risk of exposure among individuals new to working with radioactive materials or environments.

Strategies to Minimize Exposure to Other Personnel

An essential intervention for minimizing radiation exposure to personnel not directly involved in handling radioactive material is the clear demarcation of areas near radiation sources. An unrestricted area is defined as an unmarked location where the maximum absorbed dose does not exceed 2 mrem in one hour, 100 mrem in one week, or 500 mrem in one year for individuals who may be continuously present in that area (PART 20—STANDARDS FOR PROTECTION AGAINST RADIATION, n.d.).

A controlled area is one where access is limited to specific personnel and must be clearly labelled with a "Caution" sign (Measurements, 2004). Within such areas, U.S. federal regulations define three levels of radiologic areas based on the effective dose equivalence, which estimates the biological risk associated with radiation exposure in one hour. These areas require consistent dosimetric monitoring and must be marked at entrances with their appropriate designations:

- Radiation area: 5 to 100 mrem/hour
- High radiation area: 100 to 500 mrem/hour
- Very high radiation area: greater than 500 mrem/hour

Strategies to Monitor and Minimize Patient Exposures in Diagnostic Imaging

Radiation is highly effective for both diagnosing and treating medical conditions. The ideal approach involves minimizing patient exposure while ensuring sufficient radiation to achieve diagnostic accuracy.

Patient exposure during diagnostic imaging can be quantified using the integral dose, which represents the product of the incident dose, and the volume of tissue irradiated. The integral dose, measured in millijoules (mJ), provides an accurate estimate of the total energy absorbed by the patient and associated risk. For example, a chest x-ray typically delivers an integral dose of 1 mJ, while a CT scan of the head provides approximately 100 mJ (Hall & Giaccia, 2006; Johns & Cunningham, 1983). Another metric, the dose-area product, combines the entrance skin dose with the cross-sectional area of the x-ray beam. This measurement accounts for both the dose and the extent of skin exposed, offering a more comprehensive risk assessment compared to dose alone (Hall & Giaccia, 2006; Johns & Cunningham, 1983).

The F factor is a conversion coefficient that translates radiant exposure (in charge per mass of air) to absorbed tissue dose. The equation D=F·XD = F \cdot XD=F·X expresses this relationship, where DDD represents the dose, FFF is the F factor, and XXX is the exposure. Different tissues have varying F factors; for instance, the F factor for skin and muscle is 1, whereas for bone, it is 4 (Hall & Giaccia, 2006; Johns & Cunningham, 1983).

The proportion of the primary beam transmitted through the patient during diagnostic imaging depends on the anatomic site. For instance, approximately 10% of the primary beam is transmitted in a chest x-ray (90% absorbed), while skull and abdominal x-rays have transmission rates of 1% and 0.5%, respectively.

Patient exposure is directly proportional to factors such as tube voltage, tube current, and exposure time, and inversely proportional to the square of the distance from the radiation source. An effective approach to reduce exposure involves using higher tube voltage combined with a lower product of tube current and exposure time (milliampere-seconds). This allows for reduced exposure time while maintaining the required energy. However, higher tube voltage increases scatter radiation through the Compton effect, reducing image contrast and creating a limitation for this technique (Hall & Giaccia, 2006; Johns & Cunningham, 1983). The use of filters provides another strategy for reducing patient exposure. Filters are materials designed to selectively attenuate low-energy x-rays that contribute to patient absorption without enhancing image quality. This process, termed beam hardening, increases the energy of the incident beam. However, excessive beam hardening can also reduce image contrast, limiting its practical application (Hall & Giaccia, 2006; Johns & Cunningham, 1983).

Additional strategies to lower patient doses include the development of faster-developing imaging films, which reduce the required beam-on time to produce an acceptable image. Intensifying screens amplify the image by converting one incident x-ray photon into 80–95 visible light photons, reducing the number of x-ray photons needed. Finally, image grids improve image quality by absorbing scatter radiation, although their use may inadvertently increase patient dose due to selective absorption of some useful radiation (Hall & Giaccia, 2006; Johns & Cunningham, 1983).

2. Conclusion

Managing radiation exposure in medical imaging is a multifaceted challenge that requires the collaboration of radiologists, technologists, physicists, and other healthcare providers. By focusing on appropriate imaging indications, optimizing techniques, and utilizing protective measures, it is possible to significantly reduce exposure risks for both patients and personnel. Innovations such as advanced shielding methods, dose-reduction technologies, and refined imaging protocols offer promising solutions, particularly in pediatric care, where sensitivity to radiation is heightened. Furthermore, educational initiatives and stringent monitoring systems play vital roles in fostering a culture of safety and accountability. Ultimately, the goal is to maximize the diagnostic and therapeutic benefits of imaging while adhering to the principles of radiation safety to protect vulnerable populations and healthcare workers alike.

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