

Advanced CT with 3-D scanning improve detection of drug trafficking and other contraband smuggling

May 2 2011

With the high prevalence of drug abuse and trafficking in major cities throughout the world, one new study shows how advanced CT with 3D scanning can help radiologists better identify ingested or hidden contraband items more effectively.

These advanced imaging techniques can help law enforcement officers fight international [drug trafficking](#), identify medical complications caused by ingested drug packets, and reduce contraband smuggling within the penal system, said Dr. Barry Daly, lead researcher for the study. "Newer techniques for wrapping drug packets make them harder to detect on conventional x-rays. When abdominal radiographs are negative for contraband, but a strong suspicion for drug trafficking remains, our goal is to encourage law officers and medical workers to use CT with 3D scanning as part of their game plan."

While abdominal x-rays have been a part of the standard protocol for identifying drug and contraband smuggling for decades, they are only 90% accurate at best. "With drug traffickers becoming more sophisticated and learning to hide contraband items more efficiently, it's hard to identify these items on an ordinary x-ray," Dr. Daly said. "By using CT with 3D scanning, we can go from 90% to 100% accuracy. Although [CT scanning](#) is more expensive, it is much more sensitive."

Advanced CT with 3D scanning is also an important tool for healthcare

professionals in this setting. "Drug smugglers can die very quickly if large amounts of pure cocaine or heroin are released and absorbed from a leaking drug packet," Dr. Daly says. "Healthcare workers, especially in ERs, need to be aware of how to properly use CT scanning to prevent potentially hazardous internal problems for drug smugglers."

Dr. Daly and his colleagues will deliver a presentation on this study on Monday, May 2, 2011 at the 2011 ARRS Annual Meeting at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

Provided by American Roentgen Ray Society

Citation: Advanced CT with 3-D scanning improve detection of drug trafficking and other contraband smuggling (2011, May 2) retrieved 19 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-05-advanced-ct-d-scanning-drug.html>

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