

Image share project gives patients and physicians anytime, anywhere access to medical images

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Patients can successfully pull their medical images from the "cloud" making it faster for them to distribute them to their physicians regardless of where those physicians might be, according to a preliminary report of an image share project that involves five different academic institutions.

The image share project includes the University of California, San Francisco, University of Chicago, Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, the University of Maryland in Baltimore, and the Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York, NY.

"The patient can arrange with their radiologists' office to have their images and the radiology reports exported into an Internet-based personal [health record](#) (PHR)," said David Mendelson, MD, principal investigator of the image share project. Once the information is in the personal health record, the patient has full control over distribution of the images and reports. Images can be viewed immediately online by signing into one's PHR. In addition, e-mail links can be sent to physicians allowing them to view and download the images and reports as needed, said Dr. Mendelson.

Patient's like this because they "own" the exam, said Dr. Mendelson. Physicians like this because they have anytime, anywhere access to images and reports, he said. A real benefit to everyone is that quick and easy access to the images and reports could "encourage appropriate

utilization of imaging services and diminish the unnecessary radiation exposure secondary to the duplication of recent examinations because those previous examinations are not easily available to providers," Dr. Mendelson said.

Security and confidentiality are high priorities and the image share project has instituted safeguards to ensure both, said Dr. Mendelson. One of the biggest challenges that the project has had to overcome is ensuring that local HIPAA issues are addressed, he said.

This is the first phase of the project; in phase two, patients will be allowed to share their images without the images first being uploaded to an Internet based [personal health record](#). This is particularly useful in the event of severe acute trauma, with transfer to a trauma center. In phase three, the data will be de-identified and then made available for clinical trials, Dr. Mendelson said.

Provided by American Roentgen Ray Society

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