

# Student co-authors radiology study

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Roman Nelson plans to pursue a career in health research or health politics.

“I believe that out of anxiety, patients want to know their test results as quickly as possible,” Roman Nelson (’12) said. “Having a medical scan done often comes with profound news, either good or bad, so patients want to know what’s happening in their lives as soon as they can.”

Nelson, who plans to pursue a master’s degree in public health, was one of the co-authors of a study about imaging test results at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. Published in the April issue of the *Journal of American College of Radiology*, the study was designed to determine if [patients](#) wanted online access to radiology [test results](#), and if so, how quickly.

As the student research coordinator, Nelson recruited patients and administered the online questionnaire. That survey simulated a patient portal where an individual could log on to a computer to view their

results, and Nelson also worked with doctors at the medical school to create it.

The pilot study showed that about half the participants preferred immediate access to their results and about a third preferred access within three days, even in the face of very serious findings, written in complex medical language and with the knowledge that their doctor might not be available to discuss the results.

“I found it very interesting that the majority of participants wanted to see their results even before a doctor reviewed them,” Nelson said. “News like this often comes with many questions and clarification of medical terminology, but patients wanted to see those results even without counseling or clarification.”

Very few hospitals in the United States currently offer patients online access to radiology reports, and the wait time is usually a week or more, according to the study’s principal investigator Annette Johnson, M.D., associate professor of radiology at Wake Forest Baptist. The hospital is in the process of developing a secure patient-access Web portal that will have a three-day turnaround when it launches this fall.

Nelson conducted this research while also co-chairing the 2011 Hit the Bricks fundraising event for the Brian Piccolo Cancer Fund. He said raising money for cancer research and improving patient access to medical records are big components of his interest in a healthcare career.

“I felt the same sense of accomplishment and pride when I got to announce the money raised for the Brian Piccolo Cancer Fund as when I received notice of this publication,” Nelson said. “As an undergraduate student, I felt fully engaged, never just observing as I worked with professors both on the Reynolda and Bowman Gray campuses. My professors, advisors and mentors have genuinely cared about my

experiences which has made an immense impact on my education.”

Provided by Wake Forest University

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