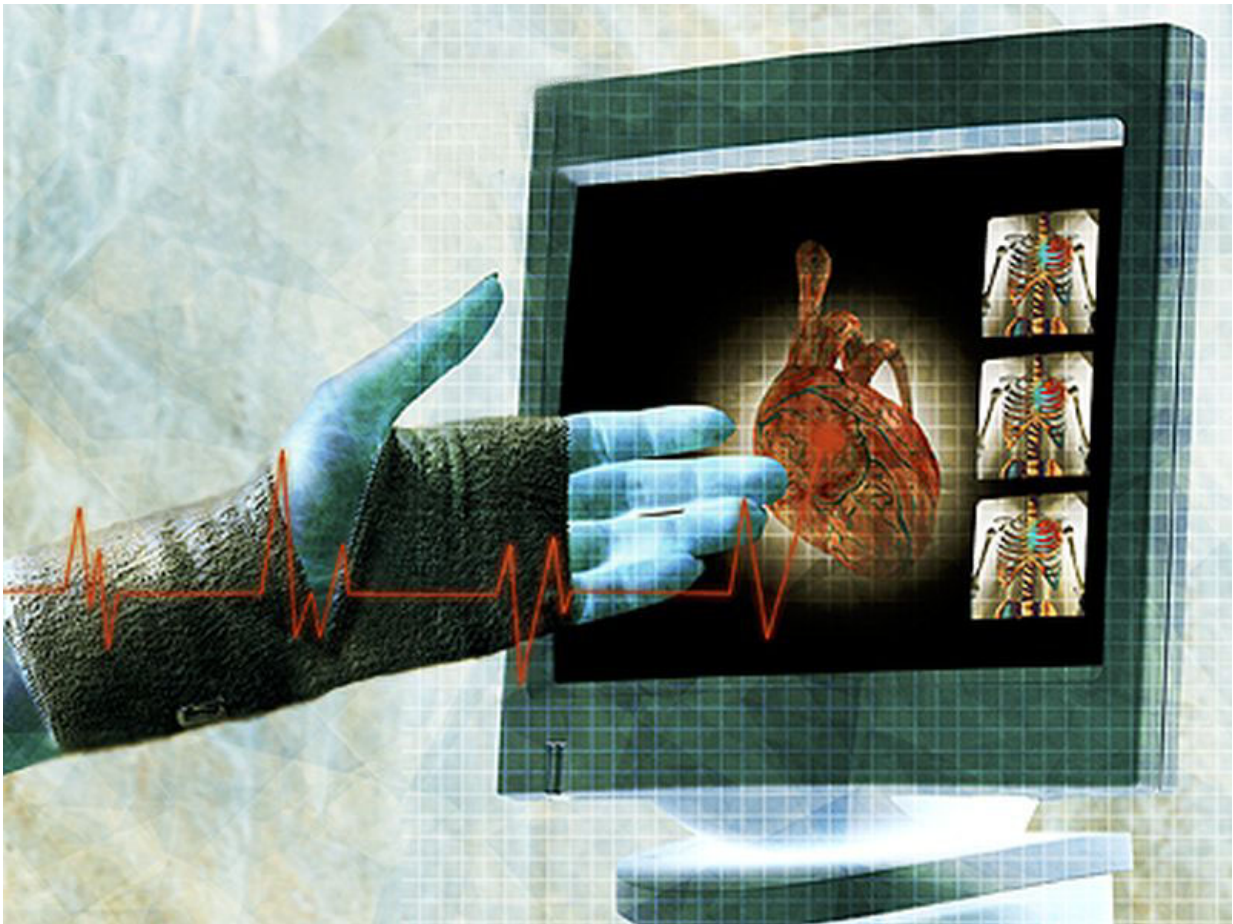


Echo underused during critical cardiovascular hospitalizations

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(HealthDay)—Despite increasing rates of use, echocardiography (echo)

may be underused during critical cardiovascular hospitalizations, according to a study published in the Feb. 9 issue of the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

Alexander Papolos, M.D., from the Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City, and colleagues used data from the Nationwide Inpatient Sample to investigate national trends, practice patterns, and patient outcomes associated with inpatient echo use.

The researchers found that from 2001 to 2011, the absolute volume and incidence of echo steadily increased at average annual rates of 3.41 and 3.04 percent, respectively. In 2010, the use of echo was associated with lower odds of inpatient mortality among hospitalizations for [acute myocardial infarction](#) (adjusted odds ratio [OR], 0.74), cardiac dysrhythmia (adjusted OR, 0.72), acute cerebrovascular disease (adjusted OR, 0.36), [congestive heart failure](#) (adjusted OR, 0.82), and sepsis (adjusted OR, 0.77). While these five diagnoses accounted for 3.7 million hospital admissions in 2010, echo was reported in only 8 percent of cases.

"Secondary analysis of imaging practices at our institution confirmed underuse of echo among patients who died during hospitalization for indications identified in the Nationwide Inpatient Sample database," the authors write.

Two authors disclosed financial ties to the medical device industry.

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