

New study advocates for better information about PET/CT scanning

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Credit: Uppsala University Hospital

Improved information before undergoing PET/CT scanning can improve patients' experience of care, demonstrates radiology nurse Camilla Andersson in a recent dissertation at Uppsala University.

PET/CT scanning is increasingly common for various oncological matters, but it also requires care recipients to understand and follow

instructions. Unprepared [patients](#) may entail delayed exams and postponed treatment, which can result in difficult consequences for care recipients and the use of unnecessary resources by an already strained medical clinic. In a recent dissertation at Uppsala University, Uppsala University Hospital radiology nurse Camilla Andersson demonstrates how with simple means, [medical care](#) can easily improve the patient experience and most likely the result of the exam as well.

"People occasionally arrive without any knowledge of how a PET/CT scan works, but the study shows that even with some insight, it can be a really trying experience for an overwhelmed and vulnerable cancer patient. On the other hand, we also see how better information gives care recipients tools to get through the exam, which can in turn increase the quality of the image material," explains Camilla Andersson.

In one sub-study of the dissertation, care recipients are offered online information well in advance that uses text and pictures to explain the process, the necessary preparations, and why they must follow the instructions of [medical staff](#). The result shows that the material helped patients before the exam and provided them with support for handling their anxiety during the scan.

"In another sub-study, we found that many patients with head and neck cancer who are put in a fixation mask feel abandoned and want to be able to communicate with medical staff during the [exam](#). Even if my observations are based on limited patient data, they indicate specific areas which, with simple means, medical care can and should improve," concludes Camilla Andersson.

The dissertation is the first in 30 years at Uppsala University to be published by a clinically active radiology nurse, which is a challenge, according to Camilla Andersson, who feels that scientific studies thereby rarely present the profession's patient-oriented perspective.

"We're facing a situation in which the number of exams is increasing at the expense of the time we can spend with each individual care recipient, and even if most of them still feel positively about the interaction and care, we must become better at making use of patient experiences. My dissertation shows that even small efforts can have major significance for patients and many hospitals have shown an interest in my findings. I also feel that my doctoral studies are piquing some interest among my colleagues, and hopefully there will soon be more radiology nurses conducting research."

More information: [PET/CT in oncology: Patient experience, image quality and the value of information.](#)

Provided by Uppsala University

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