

Doctors' intuition linked to number of imaging tests ordered

August 23 2018



(HealthDay)—Doctors' intuition plays a role in determining how many

imaging tests are ordered for a patient, according to research presented at the 40th International Conference of the IEEE Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society, held from July 17 to 21 in Honolulu.

Mohammad M. Ghassemi, Ph.D., from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston, and colleagues used 10 years of [electronic medical record](#) data to examine the role of doctors' intuition by assessing the correlation between provider sentiment and utilization of diagnostic imaging. Daily positive/negative sentiment scores of written provider notes were extracted from medical records from 60,000 [intensive care unit](#) (ICU) patients. Their correlation with the total number of daily imaging reports was estimated.

The researchers found that negative sentiment correlated with increased utilization of imaging after adjustment for confounding factors. The association with sentiment was strongest at the start of the ICU stay. The presence of any form of sentiment increased the use of [diagnostic imaging](#) up to a critical threshold.

"Clearly the physicians are using something that is not in the data to drive part of their decision making," a coauthor said in a statement. "What's important is that some of those unseen effects are reflected by their sentiment."

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Citation: Doctors' intuition linked to number of imaging tests ordered (2018, August 23)
retrieved 4 May 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-08-doctors-intuition-linked-imaging.html>

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