

Study examines benefit of follow-up CT when abdominal ultrasound inconclusive

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About one-third of CT examinations performed following an inconclusive abdominal ultrasound examination have positive findings, according to a study of 449 patients at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

Opinions vary as to the need and relevance for further diagnostic imaging workup after an inconclusive abdominal [ultrasound examination](#), said Supriya Gupta, MD, one of the authors of the study. "Our study found that 32.9% of follow-up CT examinations had positive findings, while 42.7% had findings that were not significant and 11.7% were equivocal. The remaining 12% had incidental findings, that is, important findings but not related to the clinical indication for the exam, said Dr. Gupta.

"While only about 33% of the [CT examinations](#) had positive findings it doesn't mean that the other CT exams were not valuable as sometimes even negative exams add a lot to patient management," noted Dr. Gupta.

The study found that follow-up CT was most useful in diagnosing renal lesions. The positivity rate for CT was 87.5% for renal cysts and 81.8% for renal stone, said Dr. Gupta. Renal cysts and renal stone were two of the more common indications for recommending follow-up CT.

CT had the least value as a follow up exam for indeterminate pancreatic and intestinal masses on ultrasound, with a less than 10% positivity rate" said Dr. Gupta.

The study results emphasize that the benefits of CT as a follow-up to inconclusive ultrasound examinations need to be more carefully reviewed; standardized guidelines for the use of follow-up CT need to be developed because the use of CT has cost and [radiation](#) implications, said Dr. Gupta.

The study will be presented on April 30 at the American Roentgen Ray Society Annual Meeting in Vancouver, Canada.

Provided by American Roentgen Ray Society

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