Picture Perfect: Pediatric CT Utilization in Trauma

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Radiation exposure poses a greater risk to children compared to adults. Children have a greater life expectancy than adult or geriatric patients, extending the amount of time potential cancer has to develop. Further, the body and organ size is much smaller, yet receives a similar dose of radiation when used as a diagnostic tool. The risk for developing radiation-related cancer can be higher for children exposed to diagnostic radiation than the risk for adults. Radiation exposure is quite common in trauma.

Following an ACS consultative site visit for Level II Pediatric standards, a weakness was identified regarding over-utilization of computed tomography (CT) scans on pediatric trauma patients (defined as age <15). A multidisciplinary radiation reduction plan was devised. Cervical spine and thorax CT scans were named primary targets.

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