

THE HCI SPOTLIGHT



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Dear Colleague -

What would you rank more important when reviewing your organization's performance, finance or quality? For most business people, the knee jerk reaction is financial performance. After all, with out sufficient financial resources the business would falter. I have had the opportunity to serve on a hospital board that has helped me reaffirm my thoughts on this choice. At our monthly board meetings, the first subcommittee to report is the quality committee followed by the finance committee. This is not by accident. This particular medical center is known for providing the best quality in the region, it is taken seriously and their focus. The financial results are important but the thought is that the financial results are a function of the quality of care provided. In other words, patients and physicians want to be at a place that has the best possible quality. If quality suffers, so will the bottom line of the hospital. When I reflected on this with regard to HCI, I realized that we have had the same philosophy since HCI started in 1998. We were one of the first imaging companies to embrace accreditation in 2000, even though it was not mandated by CMS. We provide education programs for employees, physicians, and patients. We have established numerous checks and balances within our operations to ensure our labs meet all state and federal license guidelines. We work on a small margin and watch costs to ensure our pricing works for our clients, but we never cut costs when it comes to quality. I think our [core values](#) are the best indication of our commitment to quality. So, I know where we stand on this issue and, in fact, have always stood. Quality rules!

Bob

CARDIOLOGY

Study: Low Iron Levels May Increase Heart Disease Risk

The current study, published July 6 in the journal *Arteriosclerosis Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology*, used genetic variations as a proxy for iron status showing that having high iron status can reduce the risk of CVD and, conversely, low iron status can increase risk.

https://www.uci.com/Health_News/2017/07/10/Study-Low-Iron-Levels-May-Increase-Heart-Disease-Risk-10749970750/
http://source-se.com_campaign=source-acupdate

Docs Should Counsel Even Healthy People on Diet, Exercise, Experts Say

Lifestyle counseling could help protect long-term heart health of adults who aren't yet at high risk for heart attack and stroke, a panel of medical experts say.

<https://consumer.healthday.com/cardiovascular-health-information-20/misc-stroke-related-heart-news-360/docs-should-counsel-even-healthy-people-on-diet-exercise-experts-say-724415.html>

A Practical Approach to Contrast Echocardiography

Contrast echocardiography refers to diagnostic ultrasound of the heart that is performed in conjunction with any acoustically active particle, including agitated saline. This mini-review will focus primarily on procedures performed with the administration of stable, commercially produced ultrasound contrast that can transition to the systemic circulation after intravenous injection with the overall goal of producing opacification of the blood pool and the microcirculation.

http://www.acc.org/latest-in-cardiology/articles/2017/07/10/09/17/a-practical-approach-to-contrast-echocardiography?utm_source=accupdate

MPI in Women—State-of-the-evidence and clinical recommendations

The clinical evaluation of symptomatic women is challenging due to their varying clinical presentation, clinical risk factor burden, high degree of comorbidity, and increased risk of major ischemic heart disease events. Evidence is substantial that both SPECT and PET MPI effectively risk stratify women with SIHD. The addition of coronary flow reserve (CFR) with PET improves risk detection, including for women with nonobstructive coronary artery disease and coronary microvascular dysfunction.

<https://www.asnc.org/files/Guidelines%20and%20Quality/ASNC%20Consensus%20Statement%20Imaging%20in%20Women%202017.pdf>

Extra Insulin Dose May Prevent Heart Disease in type 1 Diabetics

Researchers in the United Kingdom have found that one extra dose of insulin may have the potential to prevent cardiovascular disease in type 1 diabetics. People with type 1 diabetes are at up to 10 times greater risk of cardiovascular disease than the general population and heart disease accounts for more than half of all deaths in type 1 patients.

http://www.upi.com/Health_News/2017/06/05/Extra-insulin-dose-may-prevent-heart-disease-in-type-1-diabetics/1131496670608/

Inappropriate NOAC Dosing Common, May Be Compromising Safety

Inappropriate dosing of non-vitamin K antagonist oral anticoagulants (NOACs) for atrial fibrillation (AF) was common in a large US cohort study, including inappropriate dosage reductions when there weren't renal indications for them and failures to drop the dosages when renal dysfunction called for it.

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/881326>

Early Childhood Sleep Duration Associated with HDL Cholesterol in Later Childhood

Researchers observed an "unexpected association" between longer sleep duration in early childhood and lower HDL cholesterol levels in later childhood, whereas the more comprehensive cardiometabolic risk score was not affected by sleep duration, according to findings published in *Childhood Obesity*.

<https://www.healio.com/endocrinology/obesity/news/in-the-journals/%7Ba2211e42-6d19-471b-a937-44b769b638%7D/early-childhood-sleep-duration-associated-with-hdl-cholesterol-in-later-childhood>

So-Called Healthy Obese 'Still Face Disease Risks'

People who are obese but free of other health complications may still be at a higher risk of heart disease and strokes than 'normal' weight people, according to a study. The study examined the risk of developing coronary heart disease, stroke, heart failure or narrowing of the arteries for healthy obese people compared with normal weight people who were also free of other conditions.

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/880136>

Vaccine Curbs High Cholesterol in Mice

Someday, could controlling your cholesterol be as simple as getting a vaccination? That's the promise of new research in mice that suggests a vaccine might help fight cholesterol build up in the arteries.

<https://consumer.healthday.com/vitamins-and-nutrition-information-27/high-cholesterol-health-news-359/vaccine-curbs-high-cholesterol-in-mice-723821.html>

Is there a link between A-Fib and time spent working?

A Study conducted on a very large population sample from four different countries suggests that people with long working hours are at increased risk of developing atrial fibrillation.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/318416.php>

HEALTH

High-Observation Protocol Cuts Length of Stay in Head, Neck CA

A high-observation protocol (HOP) appears to optimize clinical care for patients with head and neck cancer undergoing primary surgery, according to a study published online June 20 in *Head & Neck*.

<http://www.physiciansbriefing.com/Article.asp?AID=723986>

How does a high-fat diet raise colorectal cancer risk?

While the evidence of a link between an unhealthy diet and colorectal cancer is robust, the underlying mechanisms for this association have been unclear. A new study, however, may have uncovered an explanation.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/318301.php>

Sleep Disruption Increases Alzheimer's-related Protein Levels

Disrupting deep sleep boosts the amount of an Alzheimer's disease-related protein called amyloid-beta in the fluid bathing the brain and spinal cord, new research suggests. And poor-quality sleep over time was associated with higher levels of tau, a different Alzheimer's-associated protein, in the cerebrospinal fluid, Dr. Yo-El Ju of Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis and colleagues found.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-sleep-amyloid-alzheimers-idUSKBN19W1W>

Dual Aspirin, Clopidogrel Safe, Reduces Cancer Risk

Adults treated with a combination of aspirin and clopidogrel demonstrated a reduced risk for a wide range of cancers on long-term follow-up compared with aspirin only or no treatment, according to a study published in *The American Journal of Medicine*.

<https://www.healio.com/internal-medicine/oncology/news/online/%7B78911998ed-48bc-4769-b765-50993e9b26ac%7D/dual-aspirin-clopidogrel-safe-reduces-cancer-risk>

Is Shingles Tied to Heart, Stroke Risk?

The new study looked at 2003-2013 medical records for more than 23,000 people in South Korea who had shingles. The researchers also reviewed data on a similar number of people without shingles. They found the shingles group had 59 percent higher risk of heart attack and a 35 percent higher risk of stroke than the others.

<https://consumer.healthday.com/infectious-disease-information-21/chickenpox-news-123/is-shingles-tied-to-heart-stroke-risk-724725.html>

Varian Gets FDA Nod for Halcyon Radiotherapy System

The image-guided volumetric intensity modulated radiotherapy (IMRT) system is more comfortable for patients and easier to use for health care providers, according to the company. It handles a wide range of cancer treatments, including advanced ones for prostate, breast, and head and neck disease.

<https://www.dotmed.com/news/story/38051>

Human Antibody Bolsters Cancer Drug Performance

Although generally effective, the cancer drug rituximab does not work for everyone. However, a new study finds that adding a specific human antibody to the medication might restore its cancer-killing capabilities.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/318201.php>

Parts of a Mediterranean diet shown to prevent colorectal cancer

People with advanced polyps reported consuming fewer elements of the Mediterranean diet. More specifically, the average was 1.9 Mediterranean diet components in the advanced polyps group, compared with 4.5 components in the polyp-free group.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/318276.php>

Novel PET tracer detects small blood clots

Blood clots in veins and arteries can lead to heart attack, stroke, and pulmonary embolism, which are major causes of mortality. In the featured article of *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*'s (JNM) July 2017 issue, German researchers show that targeting GPIIb/IIIa receptors, the key receptor involved in platelet clumping, with a fluorine-18 (18F) labeled ligand is a promising approach for diagnostic imaging. Current imaging modalities rely on structural characteristics, such as vascular flow impairment, and do not address the critical molecular components.

https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2017/07/soom-npi070617.php

Panel Convened at Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Meeting Say MO-99 Supplies are Secure

Supplies of the critical medical isotope molybdenum-99 (Mo-99) are secure and reliable according to a panel of leading experts gathered at the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging (SNMMI) 2017 annual meeting in Denver, Colorado in June. Mo-99 is the parent isotope of technetium-99m (Tc-99m), which is used in 30 to 40 million nuclear medicine procedures worldwide every year. (1)

<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2017/06/prweb14466754.htm>

New Drug Target for Parkinson's Disease Found

A new study has found an enzyme that drives neurotoxicity in both Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. Blocking the action of this enzyme may prevent these conditions from developing, so the research may have found a new drug target.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/318257.php>

Poor Sleep Tied to Increased Alzheimer's Risk

After controlling for age, a family history of Alzheimer's, the ApoE gene that increases Alzheimer's risk and other factors, they found that poor sleep quality, sleep problems and daytime sleepiness were associated with increased spinal fluid indicators of Alzheimer's disease.

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/05/well/mind/poor-sleep-tied-to-increased-alzheimers-risk.html?_r=1&click=ad-keywords-smartbriefsfn

Strawberry Compound May Prevent Alzheimer's

A natural compound found in strawberries and other fruits and vegetables could help prevent Alzheimer's disease and other age-related neurodegenerative diseases, new research suggests.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/318263.php>

BUSINESS

Tackling the Physician Shortage: Reduce Inefficiency, add Residency Slots

Physicians are aging out of the industry and contributing to a doctor shortage that is only made worse by the similar aging in society as a whole.

<http://www.healthcarefinancenews.com/news/tackling-physician-shortage-reduce-inefficiency-add-residency-slots>

Price Appoints Georgia Health Commissioner Fitzgerald to Head CDC

HHS Secretary Tom Price named current Georgia Department of Public Health Commissioner and state health officer Dr. Brenda Fitzgerald the next director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Fitzgerald will also serve as administrator of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Price said in the announcement.

<http://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/2017/07/NEWS/170709955-price-appoints-georgia-health-commissioner-fitzgerald-to-head-cdc>

POLITICS THAT AFFECT MEDICINE

Proposed Medicare Fee Schedule Could Help Physicians

The proposed Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) for 2018, while increasing rates by an average of less than one third of a percent, includes a few goodies for physicians. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) seeks to encourage fairer competition between hospitals and physician practices and to create a smoother transition to the new Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS). In addition, CMS promises to consider changes in its 20-year-old guidelines for evaluation-and-management (E&M) coding.

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/882937>

MedPAC Recommends CMS Simplify MIPS Reporting Requirements

A congressional agency recently issued its June report highlighting the need to improve the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) track part of the Quality Payment Program (QPP) by reducing administrative burden and increasing the importance of positive patient health outcomes.

<https://ehrintelligence.com/news/medpac-recommends-cms-simplify-mips-reporting-requirements>

CMS Releases Proposed Quality Payment Program Rule Summary

QPP was designed primarily to improve health outcomes, reduce spending and administrative burden, and offer providers a fair and transparent payment system. However, the advent of the value-based payment system has caused some clinicians—specifically those working in small or rural practices—significant administrative strain due to stringent reporting requirements.

<https://ehrintelligence.com/news/cms-releases-proposed-quality-payment-program-rule-summary>

Medicare End-of-Life Policies Should Reflect Variations in Cancer Patient Populations

Currently, Medicare policies on cancer patients' end-of-life care are based on general statistics like average survival time and treatment costs. The study found that the dominant end-of-life care settings for patients with lung cancer—home, inpatient facility, hospice, or intensive care—showed variations in survival time, expenses, number of hospitalizations, and length of palliative care.

<http://www.healthleadersmedia.com/health-plans/medicare-end-of-life-policies-should-reflect-variations-cancer-patient-populations>

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