Just 'Cause It's New And At Mayo Doesn't Mean It's Better

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I'm a big fan of Minnesota Public Radio and usually a big fan of their healthcare news coverage. They've done some bold and innovative coverage in recent years. But when I heard (on the radio) and saw (online) MPR's story, "Prostate cancer scan advance helps Mayo doctors with early detection [1]," I saw some red flags immediately.

What initially jumped out at me were some of the often-seen claims of exclusivity, which, in this case are legitimate (although with some asterisks):

- "(Mayo) is the only healthcare provider in the United States that is offering the scan to patients." That's apparently true. But haven't we advanced to the stage where we should lead with evidence, not with claims of "first in the U.S." or "first in Minnesota"? Haven't we learned yet that in healthcare, more/newer isn't always better? Should evidence/data lead the trumpet blasts? For example, oncologist Ezekiel Emanuel wrote about Mayo Clinic's plans [2] for two proton beam treatment facilities, describing them as "crazy medicine and unsustainable public policy."
- Next sentence: "The scan allows men with cancer to receive treatment that is both faster and potentially more effective than current tests. As a result, patients from around North America have flooded the clinic with requests to use the scan because it's much more sensitive than other available techniques. " There's some loaded language in that short excerpt.

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[1] http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2012/12/03/health/mayo-clinic-prostate-cancer-scan/
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