Appalling Lack Of Infection Control Procedures

First-ever survey of infection control at MRI centers finds insufficient basic infection prevention

(AP) (http://www.patientcomfortsystems.com [1]) -- Peter Rothschild, M.D., renowned radiologist and MRI expert, has released the ground-breaking paper, Survey of Infection Control in the MRI Environment: Lack of Infection Control Procedures in MRI May Place Patients and Staff at Risk. This paper documents the lack of infection control at Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) centers leading to concern over Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) spread during MRI scanning.

This first-of-its kind study was prompted by the recent report of MRSA being cultured from within MRI facilities and the death of Nile Moss, a healthy 15-year-old boy, from MRSA a few days after an MRI. The goals of the study were to determine the state of infection control in the MRI environment and what, if any, obstacles would be faced by patients or referring physicians when they attempt to determine the state of infection control at an individual MRI facility.

"Any patient lying on an imaging table could be a carrier capable of contaminating surfaces in the radiology suite," said Peter Rothschild M.D. who is attempting to transform the MRI community's attitude concerning infection control. He added "MRSA and other pathogens can live on common MRI table pads and positioners for periods as long as several months. This is why all MRI centers must have written infection control procedures."

He says without written infection control procedures, there can be no consistent infection control, even at the most basic level. The results of this survey clearly show that, in the absence of written policies, any infection control being performed is solely the result of the preferences and training (or lack thereof) of whomever is operating the MRI.

He advises that patients need to ask questions when they go to a hospital or imaging center for an MRI scan. What are the cleaning procedures? How old are the pads? Do the imaging technologists wash their hands between patients? How do technologists disinfect the MRI table and pads?

Richard Nolan M.D., a well-known orthopedic surgeon with 25 years of experience with MRIs, has been concerned for years over the lack of infection control at MRI facilities. He emphasizes, "An infection control procedure is the first action to assure the public that steps are in place to prevent life threatening infection in association with the MRI environment. However, this study clearly shows there is a breakdown of infection control at most MRI centers, particularly outpatient facilities. With infectious MRSA cultured out of MRIs, I cannot understand why these centers will

not take these life-threatening Superbugs seriously."

Dr Rothschild advises, "The best way I have found for patients to protect themselves is to visit the center before their scan and ask to see the center's written infection control policies. If there are no written policies, I can assure you that infection control has a low priority at that MRI center, and I would look for another MRI center where infection control is taken seriously. Unfortunately, this study shows that few centers have any written policies concerning infection control in MRI. Most disconcerting is that there was a tendency to tell the surveyor the politically correct answer and not the real answer to the questions."

To request a copy of Dr. Rothschild's white papers, "Preventing Infections in MRI: Best practices for infection control in and around MRI," and "Infection Control in the MRI Environment: Lack of Infection Control Procedures in MRI May Place Patients and Staff at Risk," please contact Doug Kohl, Sierra Communications, (209) 586-5887, or dkohl@mlode.com (mailto:dkohl@mlode.com) .

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