



A UNIQUE TIME IN THE PRACTICE OF RHEUMATOLOGY

Hologic C-Scan has dramatic impact on large NY rheumatology practice

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For Dr. Daniel Cohen and the other rheumatologists of Rheumatology Consultants, located in Hewlett, Long Island, New York, the installation of the Hologic C-Scan dedicated extremity MRI system has provided a host of pleasant surprises.

“This has been a huge step-up in patient care,” says Dr. Cohen.



Dr. Cohen and his technician scanning a patient on the Hologic C-Scan system

The Importance of Choice

In the past, when one of the physicians at Rheumatology Consultants ordered an MRI for one of the patients, it meant utilizing an off-site, large magnet MRI system. It also meant that the practice had no choice in the radiologist

who would read and interpret the images.

Dr. Cohen says, “Rarely would you get someone who was fellowship trained in musculoskeletal radiology, who specialized in the kind of images required for rheumatology patients.”

Installing the Hologic C-Scan in the practice has allowed the group to find the radiologist best qualified to read their images, and contract with him as part of the group. “This means a lot to the practice. It’s hard for me to overstate how important this is,” Cohen says.

“When you can choose your own radiologist, and always work with the same one, you develop a close working relationship with him, which leads to better communication,” Cohen says.

Improved Turn Around Time

Contracting with one specific radiologist, board certified and fellowship trained in the field, dramatically improves turn around time for radiological reports as well. “Before it was pot luck. It could take days to get a report back,” he says. “Now you have a specialist that you have a relationship with, and you can often get the report back the same day.”

Patient Preference

The C-Scan is not just changing things for the doctors of Rheumatology Consultants, but for the patients as well. “Patients prefer the extremity MRI system to the large magnet systems for several reasons,” points out Cohen. “One, they don’t have to travel from the point of care to get the MRI. Two, they don’t like being closed into a large, loud MRI machine. Three: with the in-office MRI, there is a more open schedule, which means less waiting. When it can be done,” he adds, “patients prefer it.”

The C-Scan is not the only piece of Hologic equipment used by Dr. Cohen in his practice. He also relies on a Hologic Discovery™ bone densitometry system with High Definition Vertebral Assessment (IVA-HD™) capability. Says Cohen, “Vertebral assessment allows me to check for compression fractures of the vertebrae, and it gives me a high resolution side view of the thoracic vertebrae without having to move the patient.”



Besides the C-Scan, Dr. Cohen also relies on a Hologic Discovery bone densitometry system

Unique Time in Rheumatology

According to Dr. Cohen, the introduction of in-office MRI into the rheumatology practice signifies a unique time in the history of the specialty. “Just now,” he says “there is beginning to emerge, among the big names and thinkers in the field, the idea that MRI is a useful, reliable, tool for diagnosing RA indications, beyond the normal x-rays.”

Indeed, recent studies have proven that, for patients suffering from rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and other degenerative bone diseases, MR imaging is far superior to traditional radiographic technology. MRI technology has demonstrated an improved ability to render the early erosion associated with RA, often as much as six to twelve months sooner than with standard x-ray systems.

“Plain x-rays are ambiguous and inconclusive,” says Cohen, “nor are they useful for showing signs of synovitis.”

Improvements in Drug Therapies

The arrival of disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs), and the newest wave of biologic drugs, has meant that with early detection, the destructive erosion of RA and other inflammatory arthritis diseases can be not only controlled, but reversed as well. The drugs therapies can only be effective, however, if the disease can be caught early enough.

“Now, with MRI,” Cohen says, “you can find the disease before it does damage, and alter the course of the disease with the new drugs”

“Never before in the history of rheumatology has there been this confluence of better imaging technology and better drug therapy. It offers real hope,” he adds, “and allows the rheumatologist a real chance to offer successful treatment.”

Other Areas of Improvement

In addition to being able to show rheumatic erosions better and sooner

than previous technology, the in-office MRI systems have also allowed rheumatologists to see other pathologies of the bone as well. “MRI imaging has given us the opportunity to see things like stress fractures, and Morton’s neuroma, as well as avascular necrosis of the bone. In some cases, we find things we were never looking for,” says Cohen, “that can better explain what is going on inside the patient.”

Tailored for the Rheumatology Practice

Dr. Cohen points out that for the demands of his rheumatology group, the Hologic C-Scan is practically tailor-made. “The C-Scan can image knees, as well as feet and hands. It is excellent for showing internal derangements of the knee, which is tremendously valuable,” Cohen says. He also points out that while the C-Scan may not be able to image every area of concern, such as the shoulders and head, the price of the system makes it practical and affordable for rheumatologists. “The cost of the system is just about right for the rheumatology practice,” he says. “The C-Scan is the perfect combination of price and capabilities.”

The C-Scan Makes Sense

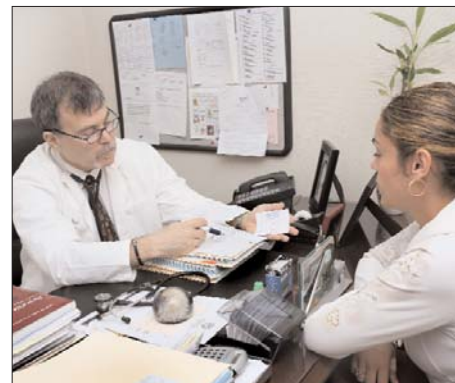
With four rheumatologists practicing on site, Dr. Cohen says that the C-Scan is busy enough to be a profit center for the practice. “We’ve basically been operating at a profit from day one,” he says, “without feeling like we were under pressure to ‘over-utilize’ the equipment.”

Dr. Cohen says that for the modern rheumatology practice, there may never be a better time to implement this new technology. “This is a propitious time for rheumatology groups to get this equipment,” he says. “If they do not, they are missing out on the opportunity to offer this technology to their patients. It’s an idea whose time is now.”

“It makes a lot of sense,” Cohen continues, “it improves your patient service, it improves the quality of the readings you are getting, because now you are getting them from a radiologist trained in musculoskeletal radiology, AND you can capture back the income that before was going out to a remote MRI site.”

Good for Rheumatology

For Dr. Cohen, there is much more to in-office MRI images than meets the eye. He sees the future of rheumatology in the MRI images produced by the C-Scan. “I think it would be a good thing for rheumatology, if all rheumatologists embraced and adopted this technology into their practices.”



Dr. Cohen and his technician reviewing cases

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