
Informatics Tools Demystify Radiology Reports For Patients



As more patients become engaged in their care, they require medical communication like radiology reports to be more understandable.

According to Tessa S. Cook, assistant professor of radiology at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, imaging informatics could contribute to facilitating patient-radiologist communication.

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As an increasing number of patients get direct access to their radiology reports via patient portals, the historical model of terminology-packed reports being for physicians' eyes only, is breaking down.

One of the main concerns is that patients misunderstand radiology jargon.

"As a one-way form of communication, the radiology report is not terribly helpful for patients," said Cook. "It doesn't provide an opportunity for the [patient to ask questions and get clarifications](#)."

This has spurred Cook and a research team to develop an informatics system called the Patient-Oriented Radiology reporTER (PORTER) that automatically attaches definitions and illustrations to terms within a report.

The patient drags the mouse over an unrecognised word or terminology and a layman definition and, in some cases, images are provided in a pop-up window.

PORTER also humanises reports by providing the name and photograph of the interpreting radiologist.

PORTER was originally created for knee MRI reports but has now expanded to include 14,000 terms with pilots underway for mammography and image-aided biopsy.

"One thing we've heard from patient advocates is that a conversation with the radiologist helps people better understand their condition or the condition of their family members, but they're never given that opportunity and that's frustrating," Dr. Cook said. "We want to find ways to create that opportunity."

Source: [RSNA](#)

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