CT colonography and colorectal screening

In the July 2000 issue of Gut, Dr Pescatore and colleagues published their experience with virtual colonoscopy and concluded that “VC does not appear to be suitable for colorectal cancer or polyp screening”. We commend the authors for pursuing this important topic, particularly as we anticipate virtual colonoscopy to be suitable for colorectal cancer or polyp screening. They have room for improvement in performing virtual colonoscopy.

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References

Author’s reply
We thank Dr Chaoui and Dr Blake for their comments. In our paper we clearly pointed out that this was an initial study and our initial experience. CT colonography is observer dependent. We noticed an improvement of our results during the course of this study, mainly in relation to increased experience of observers. In the discussion, we pointed out the different factors that should be improved in further studies, such as data acquisition in supine and prone position, as well as initial evaluation of 2D data sets, followed by interpretation of 3D data sets.

Concerning the issues raised by Chaoui and Blake, we would like to make the following points:
1 Patients in our study were mostly selected subjects according to their history or symptoms. We did not state that we were dealing with a screening study.
2 We discussed the technical improvements and changes and pointed out that patients should be screened in supine and prone position.
3 We intended to demonstrate the evidence of a learning process in comparing two groups of patients. Our results show that CT colonography is an observer and experience dependent technique. For the first time, we thus documented the necessity of thorough training.
4 Interobserver agreement was assessed between 2 teams. Non-radiologists of each team assisted the senior radiologist in the interpretation, and the final judgment was consensual.
5 We agree with the comment regarding the use of volume rendering rather than surface rendering algorithms.

We recently performed a second study, applying the technical modifications mentioned above. Results indicate a major improvement of sensitivity and specificity per patient.

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References

POSTSCRIPT

LETTERS

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What a marvellous and generous move to provide our access to BMJ journals and especially Embase.com will follow your golden footsteps.

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