



The Royal College Of Radiologists

PRESS STATEMENT

April 2004

RCR Statement regarding private CT screening

The College is aware that there is a growing body of evidence which examines the role of electron beam computed tomography and formal multi-slice CT in the assessment of a number of conditions. The evidence for certain applications for whole body CT is more robust than for other applications but at the present time, the National Screening Committee has not seen fit to support this mode of screening in the public sector.

Furthermore, the College is conscious of the fact that if such screening methodology is adopted within the private sector, this could have considerable impact on further investigation and treatment within the NHS. The National Screening Committee and the Royal College of Radiologists would therefore believe that if such whole body screening is offered within the private sector, such screening should also include the costs of subsequent follow-up procedures that might be suggested as a consequence of the screening process. There is very significant potential for any screening methodology to reveal a pathology that has no prognostic import but which would require very significant further investigation in order to satisfy the clinician and the patient that the pathology was not of significance. If this cost were to be borne by the NHS then it would have very significant impact on the delivery of other services.

Neither the College nor the National Screening Committee is making a judgement on the efficacy of screening programmes at present but simply recommending that such screening programmes in the private sector need to be introduced in a way that all marginal costs are identified as well as a robust evidence base established.