

Interventional Fluoroscopy: Reducing Radiation Risks for Patients and Staff

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INTERVENTIONAL fluoroscopy uses ionizing radiation to guide small instruments such as catheters through blood vessels or other pathways in the body. Interventional fluoroscopy represents a tremendous advantage over

invasive surgical procedures, because it requires only a very small incision, substantially reduces the risk of infection, and allows for shorter recovery time compared with surgical procedures. These interventions are used by a rapidly expanding number of health care providers in a wide range of medical specialties. However, many of these specialists have little training in radiation science or protection measures.

The growing use and increasing complexity of these procedures have been accompanied by public health concerns resulting from the increasing radiation exposure to patients and

health care personnel. The increase in reported serious skin injuries and the expected increase in late effects such as lens injuries and cataracts, and possibly cancer, make clear the need for information on radiation risks and on strategies to control radiation exposures to patients and health care providers. The Society of Interventional Radiology has produced a guide that discusses the value of these interventions, the associated radiation risk, and the importance of optimizing radiation dose.

The guide can be found on the SIR Web site at <http://www.SIRweb.org>, and access is free to the public.

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