

THE READING ROOM

Welcome to Tower Saint John's Imaging's quarterly newsletter.
We hope you enjoy the view from inside **The Reading Room**.

**SUMMER
2007**

SEEING DOUBLE: OPEN MRI WITH HIGH-FIELD STRENGTH

With one of the most sophisticated Open MRI's in Los Angeles, Tower Saint John's Imaging is able to provide all of the diagnostic qualities of a high-field MRI study with the patient benefits of an Open MRI experience.

The Hitachi 0.7 Tesla Altair offers more than double the magnet field strength, unlike most Open MRI scanners which offer just 0.2 or 0.3 Tesla. Utilizing the most current hardware and software, with specially designed coils for each body part, we are able to acquire images whose quality is comparable to many high-field, traditional MRI scanners. While a patient's girth may still be a limiting factor, our Open MRI's body-weight capacity allows us to scan most larger patients. The open architecture of our scanner also aids patients who experience mild claustrophobia, without the usual sacrifice in diagnostic accuracy of most open scanners in the marketplace. Additionally, parents of young children can stay in the room during their child's exam, and be close to their little ones.

Referring physicians who have seen the images from this scanner have been impressed by the excellent diagnostic quality that our Open MRI produces. Patients have been pleased with the open design of our scanner, and the knowledge that their body habitus or claustrophobia will not be a significant imped-



ment to obtaining an accurate diagnosis.

For those not needing an Open MRI, our state-of-the-art GE Twin Speed 1.5 Tesla High Field MRI scanner is available. Its ultrafast gradients and specialized coils allow for extremely fast scan times, and this allows us to easily add patients into the schedule under most circumstances. As always, all of our MRI studies are interpreted

by the Tower Imaging Medical Group radiologists you know and trust.

Inside:

- "Kissing Spine": A Case Study Page 2
- New Breast MRI Guidelines Page 3
- Autograph, Please! Page 4

“KISSING SPINE”: AN UNUSUAL CAUSE OF BACK PAIN

A CASE STUDY: BY BRUCE YAWITZ, M.D.

History: A 74 year old woman presented to her physician with five months of low back pain radiating to both legs, unresponsive to conservative therapy. She was sent to Tower Saint John’s Imaging for an MRI of the lumbar spine with and without contrast.

Findings: The MRI demonstrated mild degrees of age-appropriate degenerative disc and facet changes, but more striking was localized edema between the spinous processes at L3-L4 and L4-L5, extending to the lamina of the vertebral bodies, and involving the interspinous ligaments of the lower lumbar spine. Following Gadolinium administration, these areas of edema enhanced intensely, indicating an inflammatory response. Nonenhancing areas represented bursal fluid collections.

Diagnosis: Baastrup’s Disease

Discussion: Baastrup’s Disease is a well documented disorder which results from contact of the spinous processes in the dorsum of the spine, also called ‘kissing spine’, which causes enlargement and reactive changes of the spines themselves. Bursal fluid collections which develop in these regions can cause midline tenderness and pain, exacerbated with extension. Epidural cysts can ensue, which can cause spinal stenosis and nerve root impingement. These epidural cysts can communicate with one or both facet joints at the involved level, or with



Image 1: Sagittal T2 weighted image in the mid lumbar spine shows a subtle cystic focus at the level of the L4-L5 disc, arising posteriorly in the epidural space, representing bursal fluid from the interspinous bursa which dissected from the posterior soft tissues into the bony spinal canal.

Image 2: Sagittal T1 weighted image at the same level shows low signal in the interspinous region indicating fluid and edema from the interspinous bursa.

Image 3: Sagittal fat suppressed T1 weighted image following Gadolinium administration shows enhancement of the soft tissues in the interspinous region, indicating inflammation.

levels above or below the involved levels in advanced cases. Interspinous CT bursography, in which the bursae are injected with contrast under CT guidance, can demonstrate the degrees of communication between these potential spaces, and their effects on the spinal elements at the involved levels. Injection of these bursae with anesthetic can provide symptomatic relief. Excision of the ‘kissing’ spinous processes is sometimes required for relief in advanced cases. This disorder is an unusual but recognized cause of back pain, and occurs with increasing frequency with advanced age.



IMAGING BY SPECIALISTS

Dr. Bruce Yawitz is an Imaging Specialist in CT & MRI with special emphasis on Musculoskeletal and Oncologic Imaging for Tower Saint John's Imaging.



Dr. Yawitz attended the University of Pennsylvania, graduating summa cum laude in 1983, and obtained his Medical Degree from the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine in 1987. He completed his Diagnostic Radiology Residency at Harvard Medical School's Beth Israel Hospital, spending his final year as a cross sectional imaging fellow. He served as Assistant Professor of Radiology at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and was the director of Body MRI at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center from 1993 through 1995.

Dr. Yawitz joined Tower Imaging Medical Group in 1998 and worked at Century City Hospital for 6 years. He joined the Radiologists on staff at Saint John's Health Center in 2001. He has served for 3 years on the Board of Directors of TIMG.

NEW BREAST MRI GUIDELINES

The American Cancer Society has released new guidelines advising Breast MRI's for some women with a high-risk of breast cancer.

Certain women with an especially high risk of developing breast cancer should get magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans along with their yearly mammogram, according to a new American Cancer Society guideline. The two tests together give doctors a better chance of finding breast cancer early in these women, when it is easier to treat and the chance of survival is greatest.

The new guidelines are published in the latest issue of the ACS journal *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*. It recommends MRI screening in addition to mammograms for women who meet certain conditions.

You can read the full text of this article on our website www.towersji.com. For more information about these new guidelines and about breast cancer visit the American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org.

on the front
*A Surfer catches a wave
off a beach near Malibu*



GETTING TO KNOW US

MRI Department



JAMES

A chef at heart, James joined TSJI over a year ago following a long career in radiology, specifically CT and Specials, in the Santa Monica area. He has been an MRI tech since 2000. In his off time, ask him to fix up a dish of Paella or Saag Paneer. Mmm Mmm!!

YOLANDA

Following 30 years of service, Yolanda retired from UCLA's Radiology Dept. and joined TSJI in 2004. She is a world traveler. Having been many places, Italy is her top pick... loving the culture, the people and the food... she plans to travel again to Italy in October.

RANDY

An MRI Tech in the Los Angeles area since 1988, Randy received his training at the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. He enjoys watching his two boys at the skate park who keep him guessing when they say they "drop into bowls and do kick flips".



RON

An avid, long-distance cyclist, Ron has been known to pedal 50+ miles on a weekend ride. He retired from Kaiser after 30 years of MRI, CT and Specials work prior to joining TSJI. Ron and his wife just returned from a two-week trip where they traveled throughout China.



SUN-SAVVY HEALTH TIPS

Summer is quickly arriving.... The best way to lower the risk of non-melanoma skin cancer is to avoid intense sunlight for long periods of time and to practice sun safety. Try these smart sun-safety tips by the American Cancer Society to protect yourself against skin cancer:

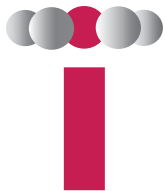
- Avoid the sun between 10am - 4pm when the sun's rays are the strongest
- Wear protective clothing
- Slap on a hat
- Wear sunglasses with 99-100% UV protection
- Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher
- Avoid tanning beds and sunlamps

Inside
THE NEXT READING ROOM:
Advancing technology
offers patients upscale
treatment at TSJI.

AUTOGRAPH, PLEASE!



Tower Saint John's Imaging takes your orders very seriously. For this reason, the referring physician's signature must be included in the bottom-right corner of all exam request forms. It is important that each form include the physician's signature so we can be sure we have been given complete and accurate orders to perform your patient's exam.



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