
POSITION STATEMENT OF SA HEART ASSOCIATION ON CARDIAC IMAGING WITH CARDIAC CT AND MRI

Task Force Members

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Background:

The rapid advance in the field of cardiac imaging has necessitated guidelines for the performance and interpretation of these newer imaging modalities.

These newer imaging modalities need careful appraisal with regards to important elements:

- a. Appropriateness of the test.
- b. Competency in the performance of the test.

Thus a task force was set up and mandated by the executive committee of SA Heart Association to draw up a position statement with regards to Cardiac Computer Tomography (CT) and Cardiac Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

Position of SA Heart:

After careful consideration the cardiac imaging task team has decided to adopt two documents, which embody the appropriateness of these newer tests as well as the clinical competency required in the performance of these tests.

- 1) *ACC/AHA clinical competency statement on cardiac CT and MRI (1).*
- 2) *ACCF/ACR/SSCT/SCMR/ASNC/NASCI/SIR appropriateness criteria for cardiac CT and MIR (2).*

Both of these were published in the Journal of American College of Cardiology and both can be accessed on the SAHA website.

ACC/AHA Clinical Competency Statement:

This position statement is broad based and applicable to all medical practitioners from multiple medical backgrounds. Essentially it defines the minimum education, training and expertise necessary for the evaluation and interpretation of these newer emerging techniques. Thus any medical practitioner, including cardiologists, would be competent to perform these procedures provided that they have undergone the necessary training.

It is important to emphasize that these are the minimum training and experience requirements for the assessment of expertise in the performance of these tests.

It is also important to stress that competency levels for cardiac CT and cardiac MRI are distinct and require separate training.

There are currently no sites in South Africa for training in cardiac CT and MRI. Members are advised to contact training institutes overseas. A significant list of training institutions is available on the Society of Cardiac CT website www.scct.org.

ACCF/ACR/SSCT/SCMR/ASNC/NASCI/SIR Statement on Appropriateness:

As both cardiac CT and cardiac MI are relatively expensive technologies, with concern from government and private payers, the correct indications for these procedures are necessary. Thus, the American College of Cardiology Foundation together with other organizations developed the appropriate list criteria for cardiac CT, which SA Heart has decided to adopt as well and also to use it as its working document. Essentially this document lists the indications as appropriate, uncertain or inappropriate.

Health Professions Council's View:

SA Heart's position on cardiologists performing cardiac imaging with cardiac CT and MRI is in line with the resolution of the Health Professions Council of South Africa with regards to the use of x-ray equipment by medical practitioners. The following resolution was tabled by a task team of HPCSA in April 2005 and endorsed by the executive committee of HPCSA in May 2005.

“The formal education and training in medical and dental specialists disciplines such as cardiology and vascular surgery (ultrasound) and dentistry provided adequate education and training for the performance of professional acts in radiography/radiology related to the specific disciplines”

Multidisciplinary Approach:

Although the clinical competency statement provides minimum criteria of competency for a particular individual, it is the task forces' view that a multi disciplinary approach including radiologists and cardiologists is desirable for the performance and interpretation of these studies. It is the task forces' view that this would not only improve the overall quality of interpretation of these tests but also ease tension between radiologists and cardiologists.

References:

1. ACCF/AHA Clinical Competency Statement on Cardiac Imaging with Computed Tomography and Magnetic Resonance
J Am Coll Cardiol 2005;46:383-402
2. ACCF/ACR/SSCT/SCMR/ASNC/NASCI/SCAI/SIR 2006 Appropriateness criteria for Cardiac Computed Tomography and Cardiac Magnetic Resonance Imaging.
J Am Coll Cardiol 2006;48:1475-1497