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[Incidental findings in medical imaging](#)

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Abstract

The success of medical imaging as a diagnostic tool has resulted in a continuing increase in its use. Technological advances mean that images are now acquired at higher resolution and in greater volumes than ever before. This has led to an increase in the detection of findings which do not appear to be related to the primary purpose of the examination and have been termed “incidental”. Many of these will be harmless but some will carry significant implications for the patient’s health. Determining which of these findings are significant and which may be safely disregarded is an increasing problem in radiology practice. Radiologists should familiarise themselves with the more common incidental findings in order to make the best possible estimation of their importance in each case and to allow them to make appropriate recommendations for further investigation where this is indicated. The decision to advise further investigation carries implications for the patient and the service as a whole and requires careful consideration.

For the purpose of this commentary, incidental findings (IF) are considered to include any findings not directly related to the primary purpose for which the imaging examination was undertaken.

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