



Faster and easier results for regional breast screening at Rose Centre

Who/where

Rose Centre, St. George's Hospital

Location:

London, United Kingdom

Type:

Regional Breast Screening center for South West London. Part of St. George's Hospital, regional cancer center.

Who:

Dr. Louise Wilkinson, Director of Breast Screening Services; Charul Patel, Senior Radiographer; Geoff Cattini, Radiology IT manager

Challenge

Transition into a digital workflow for regional breast cancer screening.

Solution

Philips IntelliSpace PACS Mammography is helping the Rose Centre improve its screening services. Images are available faster and many costly and time-consuming steps have been reduced by going to a digital process.

The new Rose Centre is a sophisticated, purpose built facility that offers breast screening and diagnostic services for women in South West London. Thanks to its new fully digital workflow powered by Philips IntelliSpace PACS with mammography feature the Centre has greatly improved its services. Staff now have faster access to high quality results and waste far less time handling films. They quickly learned how to take advantage of the new digital system.

The Rose Centre is a new unit for the South West London Breast Screening Service, which is part of the NHS Breast Screening Program in the UK. The Centre has 10 dedicated high quality mammography workstations in the reporting rooms for screening and diagnosis, and in the Centre's ultrasound rooms, which provides more flexibility in how staff work.

The Centre also manages images from several community breast screening units throughout South West London. In the UK Breast Screening Program, all women between the ages of 50 and 70 are eligible for screening every three years.

Faster digital workflow

In the old screening process, mammograms were taken on X-ray films in the satellite sites in South West London. The films were then brought to the central screening centre, processed, sorted into packets, and mounted onto roller viewers. The film readers or radiologists would read the films, one by one, on the roller viewers. The films were then removed from the viewers and re-filed. Most of these steps have now been cut out by going digital.

In the new screening process, images are acquired digitally and are readily available on IntelliSpace PACS Mammography. The studies are read on dedicated mammography workstations to streamline screening and diagnosis. "I think the speed at which it presents images is brilliant," says Dr. Louise Wilkinson, Director of Breast Screening Services. "The image quality as you see it is very good. And in particular, the way we use the system, the ability to display a client's images regardless of the hospital number that is being used is a major asset." Staff used to have to retrieve films from the archive and then compare two sets of mammograms at a light box. Now all of that information is available on screen.

Wilkinson adds, "I like the fact that the image retrieval and presentation is quick, so I'm not waiting seconds and seconds

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Dr. Louise Wilkinson,
Director of Breast Screening Services.

before the image comes up for me to report. And afterwards the reports are ready as soon as we've authorized them. They are sent directly to our electronic patient record and are visible within minutes of us authorizing the examination."

Charul Patel, Senior Radiographer agrees. "As long as the old images are scanned in you can compare them easily so it has made a lot of difference. Also, you don't have to wait for someone to load up the rollers. The images come across straightaway and you can read them quickly."

This all saves time according to Wilkinson. "We can certainly show that our time to reporting in terms of the number of women's mammograms that get reported within two weeks has improved considerably while we've gone digital."

There are other benefits. "The fact the radiographer sees their film and is able to repeat it immediately is a major improvement for the women more than anything."

Works seamlessly with other systems

The Rose Centre uses two information systems: their own local hospital Radiography Information System (RIS) and the NBSS database. IntelliSpace PACS Mammography works seamlessly with both systems.

Wilkinson says, "There is an IT bridge between NBSS and the IntelliSpace PACS system which allows us to select a unique patient ID on the NBSS/RIS system and the images will automatically be presented for that patient on the PACS system."

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Dr. Louise Wilkinson

Going from hardcopy films to digital files is not without risk, but Wilkinson is confident due to the extra security measures of the PACS system. "We have off-site storage, so that you know that there is a very substantial back-up which allows your PACS system

to be completely re-loaded should there be a catastrophic event. That makes me feel secure that I'm not going to lose an enormous number of images just because there's been a local problem."

Useful for training and consultations

St. George's runs a national training program on mammography reading, and selects cases to show as interesting examples. The PACS system is helping them build a collection of useful teaching cases by allowing them to sort by pathology. Wilkinson says, "The PACS system enables us to categorize clients in all sorts of different ways so that we can go back and draw on cases. Say, for example, we can pick cases of calcification that is benign and cases of calcification that was malignant."

Consultations with other colleagues are simpler as well. "Should we want to ask advice from our colleagues, then we are able to send messages using our RIS system, such as 'how do you feel about this,' or 'what would you say about that.' We are able to build this into our double reporting system. So I have a list of unreported cases where I

can go in and make sure that everything has been reported and authorized by the end of the day."

Easy to learn

Wilkinson is pleased with the transition to digital. "It is very user intuitive so you don't really need a lot of training on how to use it. There are lots of applications in terms of annotating examinations. Being able to categorize folders and being able to access them from a variety of different applications has been very helpful."

"I think the thing that I like the best is that I don't notice it. We worked a little bit on our protocols and they worked very quickly. We were able to program, for example, the mouse to do things that we wanted it to do. So the image manipulation is quick and easy. And so we don't really notice the viewing platform."

Radiologists quickly accepted the new PACS as well. "I think in general radiologists would far rather work with a PACS system than the old-fashioned film/screen combination because the actual mechanics of reading are

easier. I think the access to images at any site, any desktop, possibly concurrently is a major advantage over film. And of course films used to get lost. Now we know that they are in an archive and you should be able to get at them whenever you want to see them which is a major advantage," says Wilkinson.

Hope for others considering digital mammography screening

The Rose Centre has already solved many of the integration issues that other facilities in the UK and other regions may face. This should help them move to an integrated digital mammography workflow. "I hope that if they have a Philips PACS system for their

breast screening program they will find that we have crossed most of the bridges before they got to them and the solution that has worked for us may work for them," says Wilkinson.

Geoff Cattini, Radiology IT Manager says, "Having integrated to NBSS, I think it would be true to say that doing it again would be relatively simple. NBSS is NBSS, wherever you come across it, it's going to be the same. The interface is the same, the messages are the same, capabilities although slightly restricted are going to be the same. So if it works here it should work anywhere in the UK."

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Dr. Louise Wilkinson



"The images come across straightaway and you can read them quickly." Charul Patel, Senior Radiographer.



"I have no hesitancy in recommending Philips to another trust." Jeff Cattini, Radiology IT Manager.

Cattini adds, "I have no hesitancy in recommending Philips to another trust. As I said, their level of cooperation is high. They are eager to please and they are eager to innovate and do what you need."

"The PACS system provides all the mammography tools that I would be looking for, and it works very well for us." concludes Wilkinson.



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