

CT Protocol Management: Pearls and Pitfalls

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Disclosures

- OSU Radiology has research agreements with Siemens Healthineers and Qaelum.
- Our department has worked with a vendor, Qaelum, on a protocol manager prototype. No funding was provided.
- OSU protocols are managed, but the process is time-consuming.

What is a protocol?

- Starting point to achieve **consistent, high-quality** images with **reasonable** radiation and iodine contrast **doses**



Same patient
4 months later
Different scanner model



What is a protocol?

- Clinical indications for the exam and clinical parameters

CT Routine Abdomen			
Indication	Abdominal pain, most other general indications		
Oral Contrast	PO Omnipaque with 30, 45, or 60 minute prep time		
IV Contrast	Weight based Iodine injection protocol		
Delay	80 Second		
Respiration	Inspiration		

80 Second venous - Scan from diaphragm to aortic bifurcation

What is a protocol?

- Technical parameters (Siemens)

FOV	Cone in to anatomy, not to exclude any muscle		
Scan range	See ranges below		
Special Instructions	Adjust CkV slide bar to 3 if without contrast		
Typical CTDI Range (mGy): 8-31			
Scanner Protocol Name	ABDOMEN_WITHOUT or ABDOMEN_WITH		

	AS+ 128	AS+20	Flash	AS+ 64	Edge	Force	go.TOP
80 Second venous - Scan from diaphragm to aortic bifurcation							
Scan mode	Spiral	Spiral	Spiral	Spiral	Spiral	Spiral	Spiral
Rotation time	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Detector Rows	128	20	128	64	128	192	64
Collimation	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Pitch	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
kVp	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
Reference mAs	175(Safire=140)	175(Safire=140)	175(Safire=140)	175(Safire=140)	175(Safire=140)	175(Safire=140)	110
Dose Modulation	CD4D/CKV-7	CD4D/CKV-7	CD4D/CKV-7	CD4D/CKV-7	CD4D/CKV-7	CD4D/CKV-7	FULL- Non Con/ST C+

What is a protocol?

- Technical parameters (GE)

FOV	Cone in to anatomy, not to exclude any muscle		
Scan range	See ranges below		
Special Instructions	Without contrast change kV assist to C-		

	GE Brightspeed	GE HD750
80 Second venous - Scan from diaphragm to aortic bifurcation		
Scan mode	Helical	Helical
Rotation time	0.8	0.5
Detector Rows	16	64
Collimation	0.625	0.625
Pitch/Speed	1.375/13.75	1.375/55
kVp	120	120
NI	16	16
Min-Max mA	100-440	100-650
Dose Modulation	Smart/Auto	Smart/Auto/kVA-C+ 100-140

What is a protocol?

• Reconstruction parameters (Siemens)

	AS+ 128	AS+20	Flash	AS+ 64	Edge	Force	goTOP
Recon 1 - Axial							
Slice thickness	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Slice increment	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Kernel/Iterative	B40(Safire=140, 2)	B40(Safire=140, 2)	B40(Safire=140, 2)	B40(Safire=140, 2)	B40(Safire=140, 2)	Br40, 2	Br40, 3
Window	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen
Send destination	PACS	PACS	PACS	PACS	PACS	PACS	PACS
Recon 2 - Coronal MPR							
Slice thickness	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Slice increment	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Kernel/Iterative	B40(Safire=140, 2)	B40(Safire=140, 2)	B40(Safire=140, 2)	B40(Safire=140, 2)	B40(Safire=140, 2)	Br40, 2	Br40, 3
Window	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen
Send destination	PACS	PACS	PACS	PACS	PACS	PACS	PACS
Recon 3 - Axial Thin							
Slice thickness	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	0.75	1.5	1.5
Slice increment	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Kernel/Iterative	B30(Safire=130, 1)	B30(Safire=130, 1)	B30(Safire=130, 1)	B30(Safire=130, 1)	B30(Safire=130, 1)	Br40, 2	Br40, 3
Window	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen	Abdomen
Send destination	2D Lab	2D Lab	2D Lab	2D Lab	2D Lab/Syngo	2D Lab/Syngo	2D Lab

Protocol review requirements

• Regulatory (varies from state to state)

- Ohio Dept. of Health: A hospital's radiation dose review committee for CT "shall determine and review written protocols to improve image quality and minimize patient dose. The review shall include acquisition and reconstruction protocols, image quality, and radiation dose." ORC 3701:1-66-04
- Team includes RSO, physicist, physician, and technologist
- Annual review requirement for adult & pediatric head & abdomen, adult chest, and brain perfusion.

Protocol review requirements

• Accreditation – The Joint Commission

- Protocols are reviewed and kept current with input from an interpreting physician, medical physicist, and lead imaging technologist.
- Time frame for review is specified by the hospital.

Protocol review requirements

• Accreditation - ACR

- CT Protocol and Management Team that includes the supervising radiologist, qualified medical physicist, and lead technologist "design[s] and review[s] all new or modified CT protocol settings to ensure that both image quality and radiation dose are appropriate."
- Review all protocols periodically, no less than 24 months, with common protocols reviewed annually.

Protocol review

- OSU Radiology's diagnostic CT fleet:
 - 17 systems
 - 9 geographically separate locations
 - 10 models from 2 manufacturers
- Master protocols are maintained as an Excel spreadsheet on SharePoint
- Organized by body section, then by Adult/Peds, then by manufacturer

Abdomen Siemens Abdomen GE Pediatric Abdomen Siemens Pediatric Abdomen GE

Protocol review

- Protocols are reviewed with each body section (abdomen, neuro, cardiac (including cardiology), MSK, thoracic, vascular)
- Goal: One section every two months and all sections each year
- Protocol changes are made based on image quality and/or dose feedback radiologists, physicists, and technologists
 - Often changes are made mid-year, before the annual review
 - Changes are usually piloted on limited studies before changing the master protocol

Protocol maintenance

- Parameters must be changed at the scanner to make sure the protocol on the scanner matches the master protocol
- It was extremely time-consuming initially to make sure all protocols matched the master protocols
- It is very time-consuming to make individual protocol updates that are decided at each review
- It can take two technologists over an hour per scanner to make the updates & check the existing protocols for one body section (dual energy scanners take considerably longer)

Protocol maintenance

Scan/Recon	Scan Mode	CARE Dose...	kV	CARE kV...	CARE kV op...	mA	Acqui...	Pitch
Topogram	ScanPlanningTopoAdultSn		Sn 100			60	6 x 0.6	
NON CONTRAST								
NON CONTRAST 3.00 Bt40 S3 ax	RoutineSpiralAdultAbdomen	Full	120	110	Non-Co...	84 x 0.6	0.80	
NON CONTRAST 2.00 Bt40 S3 cor								
THINS NON CONTRAST 1.50 Bt40 S3								
Premonitoring		Manual kV	100	20	Soft Tiss...	1 x 10.0		
Premonitoring 10.00 Bt36								
Monitoring		Manual kV	100	20	Soft Tiss...	1 x 10.0		
Monitoring 10.00 Bt36								
ARTERIAL	RoutineSpiralAdultAbdomen	Full	120	110	Soft Tiss...	84 x 0.6	0.80	
ARTERIAL 3.00 Bt40 S3 ax								
ARTERIAL 2.00 Bt40 S3 cor								
THINS ARTERIAL 1.50 Bt40 S3								
VENOUS	RoutineSpiralAdultAbdomen	Full	120	110	Soft Tiss...	84 x 0.6	0.80	
VENOUS 3.00 Bt40 S3 ax								
VENOUS 2.00 Bt40 S3 cor								
THINS VENOUS 1.50 Bt40 S3								

Protocol maintenance

Scan/Recon	Image Type	Image Orientation	Image Order	Fix Axial	No. of Intra	Slice Thic.	Incr m.	Window	Kernel	FAST Planning	FAST Planni.	FAST 3D	SAFIRE	SAFIRE St.	4HC	IMAR
Topogram	Topogram 0.60 Tr20 cor							Topogra	Tr20							
NON CONTRAST																
NON CONTRAST 3.00 Bt40 S3 ax	MPR	Axial	Head to Feet	Off	100	3.00	3.00	Abdomen	Bt40	Upper Abdo.	Wide	On	On	3	Off	Off
NON CONTRAST 2.00 Bt40 S3 cor	MPR	Coronal	Front to B.	Off	150	2.00	2.00	Abdomen	Bt40	Upper Abdo.	Wide	On	On	3	Off	Off
THINS NON CONTRAST 1.50 Bt40 S3		Axial	Head to Feet	On	427	1.50	0.70	Abdomen	Bt40	Upper Abdo.	Wide	On	On	3	Off	Off
Premonitoring																
Premonitoring 10.00 Bt36		Axial	Feet to Head	On	1	10.00		Abdomen	Bt36						Off	
Monitoring																
Monitoring 10.00 Bt36		Axial	Feet to Head	On	30	10.00		Abdomen	Bt36						Off	
ARTERIAL																
ARTERIAL 3.00 Bt40 S3 ax	MPR	Axial	Head to Feet	Off	100	3.00	3.00	Abdomen	Bt40	Upper Abdo.	Wide	On	On	3	Off	Off
ARTERIAL 2.00 Bt40 S3 cor	MPR	Coronal	Front to B.	Off	150	2.00	2.00	Abdomen	Bt40	Upper Abdo.	Wide	On	On	3	Off	Off
THINS ARTERIAL 1.50 Bt40 S3		Axial	Head to Feet	On	427	1.50	0.70	Abdomen	Bt40	Upper Abdo.	Wide	On	On	3	Off	Off
VENOUS																
VENOUS 3.00 Bt40 S3 ax	MPR	Axial	Head to Feet	Off	100	3.00	3.00	Abdomen	Bt40	Upper Abdo.	Wide	On	On	3	Off	Off
VENOUS 2.00 Bt40 S3 cor	MPR	Coronal	Front to B.	Off	150	2.00	2.00	Abdomen	Bt40	Upper Abdo.	Wide	On	On	3	Off	Off
THINS VENOUS 1.50 Bt40 S3		Axial	Head to Feet	On	427	1.50	0.70	Abdomen	Bt40	Upper Abdo.	Wide	On	On	3	Off	Off

Protocol maintenance

Range name	Mode	CTDiac	kV	Ref. kV	Quality ref. m.	Quality ref. mAs(A)	Quality ref. mAs(B)	(EIT) mAs	(EIT) mAs(A)	(EIT) mAs(B)	CARE Dose type	Dose modu	C
Abdomen / ABDOMEN_PELVIS_DE (Adult)													
Topogram 200mA, 512mm, LAI, C1400crania													
Topogram 200mA, 512mm, PA, Cranocaudal													
Spiral 6.84			80	Sn150	100	190	95	190	95	CARE Dose4D	on		
DE_AP													

Protocol maintenance

Range name	Size	Recon	No. of Recons	Recon job	DE Comp	4HC	Series description	DE Dose	Recon job	Type
Abdomen / ABDOMEN_PELVIS_DE (Adult)										
DE_AP: Spiral, 180mAs(A), 85mAs(B), 88mAs(C), 150mAs(D), ScanTime 4.01s, Slice 3.0, Acq. 128x0.6mm										
Recon 1 3.00	3.0	07	Bt40	0.6	Off		FAST DE	axial	3D	Primar
Recon 2 2.00	2.0	161	Bt40	0.6	Off		DE_AP 2.0 MPR cor	axial	3D	Primar
Recon 3 0.75	0.7	288	On40	0.6	Off		DE_thins for terra MPR	axial	3D	Primar

Protocol maintenance

- Sometimes important protocol settings are not obvious

Organ characteristics	Child	Adult slim	Adult obese
Brain	Weak	Average	Strong
Neck	Strong	Average	Average
Shoulder	Strong	Strong	Strong
Thorax	Strong	Strong	Average
Abdomen	Average	Strong	Average
Pelvis	Strong	Strong	Average
Spine	Strong	Average	Strong
Osteo	Strong	Strong	Average
Head/Vascular Head	Strong	Strong	Average
Vascular Body	Strong	Strong	Average
Runoff	Strong	Strong	Average
Cardio	Strong	Average	Strong
Respiratory	Strong	Strong	Average

Protocol maintenance

- Sometimes important protocol settings are not obvious



Potential Solutions

- Homegrown solutions
- Export protocol as a CSV, XML, or other semi-readable format at each scanner
- Use a script to read in protocol parameters for display and review.
- While this can save time after the initial time investment, there is no guarantee that a vendor software update won't change the protocol export format.
- Each unit still needs to be accessed individually to export protocols.

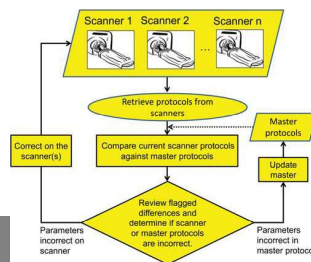
Potential Solutions

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Implementation and evaluation of a protocol management system for automated review of CT protocols

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Potential Solutions

A Wiki-Based Solution to Managing Your Institution's Imaging Protocols

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Reduces the number of “free” parameters by having most protocols reference parameters in a “master” protocol for a given body section and contrast phase.

Potential Solutions

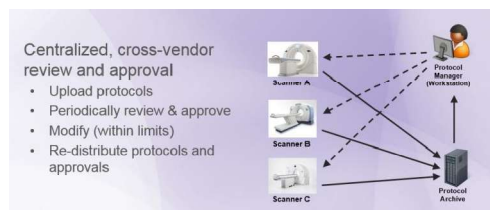
- Manufacturer's offer solutions with their analytics tools:
 - Siemens teamplay Protocols
 - GE Imaging Protocol Manager
 - Philips Incisive CT
 - Canon Vitality XT CT Applications
- Most can view protocol parameters on their vendor's scanners
- Depending on the software, the ability to “push” to scanners may be limited
- None (that I know of) can manage protocols for other vendors

Potential Solutions

- 3rd Party Dose Monitoring Software
 - Imalogix
 - Qaelum Dose
 - Radimetrics
- Range of functionalities from “fancy spreadsheet” to store your master protocol to automated solutions that detect deviations from master protocols

Potential Solutions

- Management of Acquisition Protocols (MAP) IHE profile would allow for vendor-neutral protocol management



https://wiki.ihe.net/index.php/Management_of_Acquisition_Protocols

Conclusions

- CT protocol management includes thousands of scan and reconstruction parameters.
- Access to make protocol changes should be restricted to a small team.
- When done manually, protocol updates can be time consuming.
- Tools are beginning to become available from vendors that allow viewing and (in some cases) editing of protocols remotely.
- Bug your vendor to support the Management of Acquisition Protocols (MAP) IHE profile for vendor-neutral protocol management