



MINI SURVEY REPORT ON ACCESS TO CT SCAN DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES IN TANZANIA

Background

The use of modern radiographic diagnostic technologies has continued to increase in many countries. Although in many countries, especially in developing countries, conventional radiography is still a dominant diagnostic tool in comparison with other imaging techniques such as CT Scan (Muhogora et al, 2012), the need for CT Scan services has increased significantly. CT Scan represents only 5% of the total medical x ray procedures worldwide however; the need for CT scan in Tanzania has continued to rise.

Provision of CT Scan services in Tanzania is crucial. CT Scan has revolutionized medicine because it allows doctors to see diseases that , in the past, could often only be found at surgery or at autopsy. It provide a highly detailed look at many different parts of the body. By 2004, Tanzania had 8 functional CT scanners, with the common CT examinations being the head investigations (60%), followed by spine (21%), abdomen (9%), chest (5%) and pelvis (2%) (Ngaile, Msaki & Kazema, 2006)

In the months of June and July this year, Sikika conducted a mini survey to find out the extent of the CT Scan problem at Muhimbili National Hospital, Agha Khan and TMJ Hospitals. The information was collected using Interviews with the people from respective units.

The Mini Survey Findings

These findings are based on the interview with a nurse in the radiology department and three doctors at Muhimbili National Hospital, Aga Khan and TMJ hospitals in Tanzania

The following are the findings:

1. On average, in the three hospitals surveyed, 56 clients require CT Scan services per day.
2. Muhimbili National Hospital is the only public hospital that provides CT Scan services in Tanzania. However, the CT Scan service at Muhimbili hospital is no longer available.
3. For Seven months now, Muhimbili's CT Scan machine is not working and we didn't see the efforts to repair the machine.

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4. Tanzania loses about 6% of patients per year who get accident and who require CT Scan services for appropriate management. Approximately 90% of patients who got accident are sent home without CT scan services. - *From the statement given by the Intern doctors who attended FemAct Meeting on 3rd July, 2012*).
5. The cost of CT Scan services at Muhimbili National Hospital is approximately TShs 170,000/= while in private hospitals, the cost ranges from 200,000/= to 500,000/= that is beyond affordable range of a mere citizen. years) is enough to buy a new CT Scan since its first installment. -*From the statement given by the Intern Doctors who attended FemAct Meeting on 3rd July, 2012*).

While Muhimbili Hospital has a problem of repairing CT Scan for 7 months now, the experience from private hospitals shows that the repair of CT Scan machine ranges between 2 to 14 days depending on the extent of the problem. The experiences from the private hospital shows that CT scan Machine is always procured with warrant and guarantee. The guarantor is mostly responsible for repair at no or a subsidized cost if there is a technical problem with the machine. Moreover, private hospitals use the vendor who procured the machine and these vendors, plays a big role in maintenance and repair of the machine.

Some of the machine brand have branches in Tanzania, these brand are Philips and Siemens. This helps to speed up repair and maintenance because they have their express in Dar es salaam. Muhimbili National Hospital have a Philips Med Systems CT Scan Machine manufactured 1995, Installed in 1996. Scan mode is Tomoscan Sr 4000 single slice Axial and helical modes. It has focal axial distance (FAD) 606mm/Detector type Xenon gas. This means they have access to Philips expertise within the country.

Recommendations

It's the government's role to ensure availability of medical and diagnostic services to tax payers, thus Sikika recommends;

- That, the MoHSW make a close follow up on the CT Scan issue at Muhimbili National Hospital for the machine to be repaired as soon as possible for the CT Scan dependent diagnostic services and management to resume as earlier.
- That, the irresponsible parties be held accountable.
- And that, the government should cover the related expenses for the people who require CT Scan services at the National hospital who use the private hospital CT Scan services that is expensive. The government should cover the extra expenses for the patients who use private hospital CT Scan services especially when the expenses exceed Tsh 170,000/=

References

- Muhogora, W.E., et al (2008): Patient Doses in Radiographic Examinations in 12 Countries in Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe: *Initial Results from IAEA Projects*, vol. 190 no. 61453-1461, doi: 10.2214/AJR.07.3039AJR
- Ngaile, J.E., Msaki, P., R. Kazema, R., (2006): Current status of patient radiation doses from computed tomography examinations in Tanzania, *Radiat Prot Dosimetry* [Online] doi:10.1093/Rpd/Ncl001