Reimbursements Are Top Concern of Providers in Breast Imaging

Providers rave about Hologic tomosynthesis' cancer finding potential and vent about reimbursement and PACS integration issues

OREM, UT, April 10, 2012 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- In a new KLAS study, "Women's Imaging 2012: Tomosynthesis Makes a Splash," Hologic leads as the number one vendor in digital mammography. Combined with a strong digital mammography product and excellent service, tomosynthesis helps Hologic solidify their leadership position in the space.

Tomosynthesis lives up to the hype, but KLAS found that there are still some issues to be ironed out with the newly approved technology. For those upgrading to tomosynthesis, the high cost is something to consider, especially because reimbursements continue to be cut for screening. Also, PACS lack of integration plagues some providers, causing workflow problems.

"Some customers reported that their PACS system would not accept tomosynthesis studies. It has created a workflow concern for radiologists who have to leave their office or reading room and come out to the tomosynthesis workstation to read the study," said report author Monique Rasband. "Despite these challenges, many are saying it is worth the effort because they are able to so clearly identify lesions they may not have been able to see before."

GE leads the second tier of digital mammography vendors. Fuji, GE, and Siemens all perform above the medical equipment average, but have not quite been able to keep up with Hologic. GE has a market share advantage over Fuji and Siemens. A wide range of imaging products and long-established relationships propel GE into many new digital mammography deals. However, KLAS found that sub-par implementations and lagging tomosynthesis development keep GE second to Hologic.

Siemens improved year over year and is fighting for market share with their second run at digital mammography--this time using their own detectors. Siemens has made some headway tackling reliability issues, but more work is needed. KLAS found that the Siemens customers reported the most downtime in the study. Fuji was found to play prevalently in smaller hospitals and outpatient centers and customers appreciated the cost-effective solution. However, Fuji's CR unit is seen as old technology. Their new digital mammography unit, recently FDA approved, has not picked up a lot of steam among Fuji's current customers.

Reimbursement problems plagued the niche vendors included in the study. Aurora, Dilon, SonoCine, and U-Systems all offer a niche breast imaging product, and all had customers that reported problems getting reimbursed for screening patients. Many providers liked the functionality of SonoCine and U-Systems, but said they would not use it in many cases because reimbursement codes did not exist and patients did not want to pay out of pocket. Those doing diagnostic imaging with these modalities did not run into as many issues with reimbursements. U-Systems is currently working with the FDA to get approval for screeing in all 50 states.

Though not ranked in the study, several RIS and mammography information system (MIS) vendors are discussed. When providers were asked to rate the usability of their MIS or RIS vendor, it was found that MIS vendors PenRad, MRS, and MagView have some niche functionality that providers like, but they somewhat lack in service coverage. Providers reported that a couple of the RIS vendors, Fuji and Merge, have excellent mammography modules. On the other hand, some of the larger IT vendors like Cerner, GE, and Siemens struggle to provide the functionality needed for mammography.

To learn more about the women's imaging market and the strengths and weaknesses of the measured vendors, the report "Women's Imaging 2012: Tomosynthesis Makes a Splash" is available to healthcare providers a significant discount off the standard retail price. To purchase the report providers and vendors can visit www.KLASresearch.com.

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