



POLICY

Ultrasound for Non-Medical Reasons

STATUS:	APPROVED
Approved by Council:	November 2009
Amended:	September 2010
Reviewed & confirmed:	November 2013
Reviewed:	November 2018
To be reviewed:	November 2023

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clarify for physicians their obligations with respect to ordering and performing diagnostic ultrasounds.

Introduction

As more advanced ultrasound technologies are becoming available, expectant mothers and their families have been requesting fetal keepsake videos and portraits. In addition, requests are made for the performance of an ultrasound to determine the sex of the baby. Physicians are under increasing pressure to perform and/or order ultrasound examinations for non-medical purposes.

There are a number of organizations that have formal statements that provide that the use of ultrasound for entertainment or fetal gender determination purposes is inappropriate. Health Canada, the Advisory Committee on Medical Imaging of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan, the Canadian Association of Radiologists, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, the Canadian Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers, and the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine are just some of the organizations that oppose the use of ultrasound for these purposes.

College Policy

Physicians must ensure that all diagnostic imaging examinations are ordered and conducted for appropriate clinical indications. The use of ultrasound only to view the fetus to obtain a picture or video of the fetus or only to determine the gender of the fetus without a medical indication is inappropriate and contrary to good medical practice.

The purpose of an imaging examination should always be to obtain information relevant to the diagnosis or treatment of a patient, or both. Therefore, when requesting the examination, the physician should specify the clinical indications and the information needed.

Should it be brought to the attention of the College that a physician is ordering or providing diagnostic tests (including ultrasound) inappropriately, the College will investigate and take action, where warranted. In addition, ordering or providing ultrasounds for non-medical reasons and billing MSB for this service may be viewed by the College as unbecoming, improper, unprofessional, discreditable conduct.

Acknowledgments

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