

One RIS for Radiological Institutions of all Sizes



Optimal Workflows generate more Time for Patients and Job Satisfaction

When established in October 2013, the imaging center "Radiologie Gersag" decided to implement all processes digitally – for both internal workflows as well as external communications. This digital communication infrastructure creates an efficient and secure information flow between patients, referrers, other medical institutions and radiologists. In addition to state-of-the-art devices (MRI, CT), conventional X-ray, ultrasound, mammography and fluoroscopy, medavis RIS is the basis for short waiting times, quick treatment results and efficient operations.

Digital from Start to Finish

Working digitally from start to finish was the plan when Dr. Heinrich Hofstetter and Dr. Ralf Wandt founded their imaging center in Emmenbrücke near Lucerne, Switzerland, in October 2013. No fax should be printed out; no sticky note should be attached to a paper file. Dr. Hofstetter describes the situation in early 2013, when he started to plan the new imaging center with his colleague: "All modalities work digitally nowadays, that's why we thought that we could implement digital processes throughout all steps of our daily work as well. We had a look at the solutions of several vendors and consulted a software specialist. We also asked around who used which system and how satisfied the users are. After visiting an installation in Germany, we selected medavis RIS." Dr. Hofstetter and his colleague Dr. Wandt defined the following criteria for a suitable software:

- A clear functional structure for each user group throughout the radiological workflow
- An intuitive user interface providing a good overview
- A flexible software that allows adjustments when necessary
- Easy user rights management
- Connection of all modalities, PACS and call identification

"Finding what I need intuitively exactly describes my idea of a good software," summarises Dr. Hofstetter. "We are a private institute and our aim is to offer the best service. The software should help us to achieve this." The medavis project manager challenged the physicians with many preparatory tasks in order to make sure that the RIS fulfilled all their requirements. The users were asked to collect the data to be imported into the system in tables in order to map the process optimally from day one. Dr. Hofstetter recalls the system implementation phase: "That was more work than we thought beforehand, but it was worth it and enabled us to start with a clean system. Our goal was to process enquiries from referrers immediately in order to quickly contact the patient for an appointment. To achieve this, all names, addresses and other data of our referrers had to be entered into the system." Other requirements were a smooth patient registration, automatic billing, access to all modalities and the PACS integration. "The last point was especially important to me," mentions Dr. Hofstetter. "I want to see the images before an examination is finished so that I can quickly decide if further images are necessary or if the patient can get dressed. It is an imposition for a patient to endure several CT, MRI or X-ray examinations just because I need another image." Being able to simply switch from RIS to PACS and back to RIS was therefore an important factor.

Useful Functionality

After the intensive implementation phase, during which the description of the requirements took a lot of time, the system introduction was very quick. The users were trained and could work smoothly from the beginning. For example when scheduling appointments: "Thanks to the call identification module, our employees already know who is on the line when for example one of our referrers calls. They immediately have the background information in order to quickly schedule or propose appointments." Depending on the preferences of the referrer, an employee calls the patient back or the referrer schedules the appointment directly with the patient. Registrations also come in as digital faxes and an employee then calls back the referrer. The information transferred with the fax is added to the patient record via drag & drop. "My employees confirm that working with medavis RIS gives them a good feeling about what they are doing. It is important for me that it is like that," explains Dr. Hofstetter. "The excellent process support enables us to send a patient back to the referrer the same afternoon after having been examined at 11 o'clock in the morning." These short processing times are also possible because the physicians Dr. Hofstetter and Dr. Wandt use speech recognition for documentation. The speech recognition can be called up directly from the RIS report editor and is always available in the background. In order to create reports even faster and easier, the physicians work with text modules. These modules are linked to a certain diagnosis and can then be inserted and adjusted in the report. "A standard report I dictate sounds like this: Normal, normal, normal, something special concerning the patient, normal, normal – and the report is done." A report is available to the referrer in two to four hours. The fact that data can be collected digitally during registration, examination and reporting also optimises the billing process, for which medavis offers a tailored solution for radiologies in Switzerland. "For a start-up

institute like ours, it is important that invoices can be generated quickly. The software contributes a lot to cost-effective operations of our radiology. It guides me through the process, accelerates it and makes sure I do not forget anything. That's what I call intuitive work, even though I don't even use all the functions yet that the RIS offers," explains Dr. Hofstetter. In addition to cost-effectiveness and time-saving, Dr. Hofstetter emphasises another important issue: "I want to show the images to the patient so that he gets a better understanding of his injury and why a treatment is carried out in a certain way." The PACS integration allows the radiologists to do that. As soon as a patient is selected in RIS, he is automatically called up in PACS as well. The corresponding images are available without switching systems or screens.

RIS increases Satisfaction

"We are very satisfied, both with the system and with the collaboration with medavis," concludes Dr. Hofstetter. After intensive preparations, introducing medavis RIS was successful and the right step for him and his employees. "The great benefit of digitalisation is that the collaboration with everyone involved in the process is improved. This also includes the patient. Coordination and exchange of information with the referrer are quicker and the patient doesn't have to wait long and can be better involved in his treatment. I can concentrate on my medical work because documentation and billing are done smoothly." Dr. Hofstetter feels prepared for a future in which patients increasingly want to be involved. "We live in a voyeuristic age. Already today we explain the severity of an injury to a patient by showing the images. This creates understanding for the type of therapy and makes our medical service clear. Patients are becoming more and more critical when selecting a physician and increasingly inform themselves. The software can help us to meet these demands."

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