

## DXA Troubleshooting And Challenging Cases

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## COI Disclosures:

Sarah Morgan: MD, RD, CCD : None

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## Course Objectives

- Reconsider the appropriateness of "image not for diagnostic use" disclaimer
- Review situations where the DXA images give clues to the diagnosis or mis-interpretation
- List common errors in DXA scanning and reporting with examples

## Outline

- "image not for Diagnostic Use
- List the most common errors in DXA scanning with examples
  - Not labelling spinal levels appropriately
  - Not labelling spinal levels analogously on follow up scans
  - Differences in hip positioning
- Review situations where the DXA images give clues to the diagnosis (reconsider the appropriateness of "image not for diagnostic use" disclaimer.
  - Common artifacts
  - Problems in spine and hip analysis
  - Interval compression fracture
  - Show examples of specific disease processes seen on the DXA image.



## "Image not for diagnostic use"

Where did this disclaimer come from?

Is it still valid?

## History of Imaging in Bone Densitometry

- 1963 SPA No image.
- 1980 FDA approves first DPA device and requires the disclaimer: "Image not for diagnosis" to appear on all image printouts.
- 1986 FDA approves first pencil beam DXA
- Fan-beam DXA devices:
  - 1991 Linear scanning (transverse beam)
  - 1993 Rectilinear scanning (sagittal beam orientation)
- 2002 FDA approves Vert. Fx. Assessment
- 2007 FDA approves SE IVA for AAC
- 2017 FDA approves extended femur imaging for detection of AFF



## Image Resolution Varies By Scanner



## Resolution Varies with Scan Mode



## Image Post-processing Cannot Improve Resolution



- Image processing (window, level, interpolative smoothing, anti-aliasing) make image more pleasing to the eye
- Cannot create detail not present in raw data

## Post-processing and Artifact Detection





Follow-up

Baseline

## "Image not for diagnostic use"?



## Image not for diagnostic use

- Disclaimer is not a mandate
- Images convey the veracity of the underlying BMD
- Comparing serial images compensates for lower resolution
- Synergy between BMD, images, and patient presentation
- Errors of omission if we ignore them

## Image for limited diagnostic use

## The most common DXA errors

#### **Spine Errors**

- Incorrect or inconsistent vertebral labeling
- Incorrect intervertebral space identification
- Unrecognized pathology or artifacts
- Unrecognized interval changes

#### **Other Errors**

- Unappreciated or ignored serendipitous findings
- Discordance in changes at skeletal sites
- Results unexpected or mismatched to patient presentation

#### **Hip Errors**

- Incorrect or inconsistent patient positioning
- Incorrect or inconsistent regions of interest sizes and placements
- Unrecognized pathology or artifacts

## Problems with Intervertebral Marker Identification and Placements

## Vertebral Level Identification

- Extra Lumbar Vertebral Body?
- Establish a vertebral body numbering convention in your center?
- ISCD recommendation is to count from sacrum upward

375 Patients with complete spine exams (assumes 12 thoracic vertebra and first rib on T1)

		Lowest Pair of Ribs				
# of Lumbar	T-11	T-12	L1	Total		
4	5.3%	2.1%	0%	7.4%		
	(20)	(8)	(0)	(28)		
5	7.2%	83.5%	0%	90.7%		
	(27)	(313)	(0)	(340)		
6	0%	0.8%	1.1%	1.9%		
	(0)	(3)	(4)	(7)		
Total	12.5%	86.9%	1.1%	100%		
	(47)	(324)	(4)	(375)		



Appear as 5 Lumbar

Appear as 6 Lumbar

### Mislabeling affects BMD and T-scores

- Can misclassify diagnosis
- Impedes ability to monitor with serial scanning

Region	Area (cm <sup>2</sup> )	BMC (g)	BMD (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	T - Score
L1	15.56	12.47	0.802	-1.1
L2	15.70	13.33	0.849	-1.6
L3	16.09	(13.14)	0.816	-2.4
L4	18.66	16.42	0.880	-2.1
Total	66.02	55.36	0.839	-1.9



Region	Area (cm <sup>2</sup> )	BMC (g)	BMD (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	T - Score
L1	14.56	10.66	0.733	-1.7
L2	15.30	12.39	0.810	-2.0
L3	15.64	13.31	0.851	-2.1
L4	16.75	13.67	0.816	-2.7
Total	62.25	50.03	0.804	-2.2



## Bone Loss



DXA Res	sults Sur	nmary:	Baseli	ine	
Region	Area (cm²)	BMC (g)	BMD (g/cm²)	T - score	Z - score
L1	13.72	12.68	0.924	0.0	0.8
L2	16.68	16.37	0.981	-0.4	0.5
L3	18.21	17.66	0.970	-1.0	-0.1
L4	20.17	17.27	0.856	-2.4	-1.4
Total	68.78	63.97	0.930	-1.1	-0.1

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DXA Results Summary:			Follow-up		
Area (cm²)	BMC (g)	BMD (g/cm²)	T - score	Z - score	
13.32	9.49	0.713	-1.9	-1.1	
13.77	12.39	0.900	-1.2	-0.2	
16.92	16.26	0.961	-1.1	-0.1	
17.86	17.25	0.966	-1.4	-0.4	
61.87	55.39	0.895	-1.4	-0.4	
	Area (cm²) 13.32 13.77 16.92 17.86 61.87	Area (cm²)BMC (g)13.329.4913.7712.3916.9216.2617.8617.2561.8755.39	Area (cm²)BMC (g)BMD (g/cm²)13.329.490.71313.7712.390.90016.9216.260.96117.8617.250.96661.8755.390.895	Area (cm²)BMC (g)BMD (g/cm²)T - score13.329.490.713-1.913.7712.390.900-1.216.9216.260.961-1.117.8617.250.966-1.461.8755.390.895-1.4	

Total BMD CV 1.0%, ACF = 1.026, BCF = 0.997, TH = 5.927

## Bone Loss Imaging (cont)



The ISCD recommendation is to include all levels from pelvis to first set of ribs and count from pelvis upward, even if 6 non-rib bearing VB's for consistency

## Different Levels Invalidates Serial Results





	1	rend: L1-L4	Char	ige vs
Measured Date	Age (years)	BMD (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	Previous (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	Previous (%)
6/23/2011	85.7	1.013	-0.069 *	-6.4 *
6/22/2009	83.7	1.082	0.017	1.6
6/21/2007	81.7	1.065	0.083 *	8.5 *
12/6/2004	79.2	0.982	-	-

-1.1

-1.4

0.9

0.5

L4

L1-L4

1.073

1.013

## Auto-Analysis marker placement is imperfect





Trend: L1-L4						
Measured Date	Age (years)	BMD (g/cm²)	Change vs Baseline (%)	Change vs Baseline (%/yr)		
01/19/2004	77.3	1.507	24.4 *	10.8 *		
10/19/2001	75.1	1.211	buteline	baseline		

## Manual analysis is not always perfect





Trend: L1-L4						
Change vs Change v						
Measured	Age	BMD	Basine	🔪 Baseline		
Date	(years)	(g/cm²)	(%)	(%/yr)		
01/19/2004	77.3	1.412	<b>16.6</b> *	/ 7.4 *		
10/19/2001	75.1	1.211	basenne	baseline		

# BMC Histogram may help or hinder line placement



- "Valleys" should represent intervertebral disks
- Osteophytes can turn valleys into peaks

## Not Labeling Spinal Levels Appropriately



- Inconsistent or improper intervertebral labeling confounds
  - Identifying levels with pathology
  - Comparisons to prior or subsequent scans proper placement
  - Identification of vertebral height loss and incident vertebral deformities

# Interval Compression Fractures



Side by side image comparisons

- Modern scanners allow display of prior study (on right) to current exam during acquisition
- Mask of prior analysis copies heights and labels
- But not all facilities may know of this feature

# Look for subtle visual changes

- Subtle change in appearance of L1
  - Incident mild wedge deformity?
  - Consider VFA or other imaging for verification?
  - Change in management?
- Serendipitous finding: Did patient have a cholecystectomy between exams





Region	Area (cm <sup>2</sup> )	BMC (g)	BMD (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	T - score	
L2	12.64	11.35	0.898	-1.2	
L3	12.85	12.72	0.990	-0.9	
L4	14.14	13.58	0.960	-1.4	
Total	39.63	37.65	0.950	-1.2	





Region	Area (cm <sup>2</sup> )	BMC (g)	BMD (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	T - score	
L2	10.49	10.69	1.019	-0.1	
L3	12.76	11.80	0.925	-1.4	
L4	14.75	13.42	0.910	-1.9	
Total	38.00	35.90	0.945	-1.2	

## Comparing Images and BMD data



The BMD of L1 went from the lowest to the highest.

Region	Area(cm <sup>2</sup> )	BMC(g)	BMD(g/cm <sup>2</sup> )
L1	11.45	10.88	0.951
L2	12.97	11.72	0.903
L3	14.95	11.80	0.789
L4	16.50	14.35	0.870
TOTAL	55.87	48.75	0.873

Region	Area(cm <sup>2</sup> )	BMC(g)	BMD(g/cm <sup>2</sup>	
L1	13.56	10.07	0.743	
L2	13.75	11.63	0.846	
L3	14.56	11.83	0.812	
L4	16.44	14.34	0.872	
TOTAL	58.31	47.87	0.821	

## Images in discordant and unexpected changes

Indications: Established osteoporosis with vertebral augmentation, follow-up on alendronate

Results: Osteopenia of the hip and osteoporosis at the spine. There has been a 5.3% increase in BMD at the spine and a 4.7% loss at the hip.

Changes of less than 5% are not considered to be statistically significant.

Impression: Improvement in bone mineral density on alendronate. The patient is encouraged to continue her current therapy and return for a repeat scan in two years."



Scan:	07/11/2	00		
Scan Mode:	Fast Ar	ra		
Analysis:	07/11/2	00		
Operator:	MAS			
Model:	Hologic	: Ç		
	COM			
Result F	listory	ARISON		
Result F	listory e Age	BMD	T score	Cha
Result F	listory e Age	BMD Total[L]	T score	Cha Baseline
Visit Date	History e Age	BMD Total[L] 0.683	T score	Cha Baseline



DXA Scan Information	۱	1
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Scan:	07/11/2006
Scan Mode:	Fast Array
Analysis:	07/11/2006
Operator:	MAS
Model:	Hologic QDK-4500 (5/N 48102)
Comment:	COMPARISON

#### Result History:

27-May-04	53.1	0.736	-2.8	
11-Jul-06	55.2	0.775	-2.5	5.3%

# Differences in Hip Positioning

# Differences in Hip Rotation and Abduction

Region	Area (cm <sup>2</sup> )	BMC (g)	BMD (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	T - score	PR (%)	Z - score	
Veck	4.63	3.43	0.741	-1.0	87	0,6	
Fotal	33.95	28.10	0.828	-0.9	88	0.3	



- Lesser trochanteric profiles not same size and location
- Pelvic rim outline
- Pelvic bone measured within the femur neck box.

from the	The Eff Neutral Posit	ect of Increa ion on the F	Table 2- sing Intern emoral Ne	-8 nal or Extern eck BMD (g/	al Rotation cm²) of Cada	weric Fem	115
ι.	Neutral	Exte fre	ernal Rota om Neutra	tion l of	Inte fre	ernal Rota om Neutra	tion l of
Cadaver No.	0°	15°	30°	45°	15°	30°	45°
1 2 3 4	0.490 0.574 0.835 0.946	0.524 0.567 0.872 0.977	0.549 0.632 0.902 1.005	0.628 0.711 1.071 1.036	0.510 0.581 0.874 1.102	0.714 0.619 1.037 1.283	0.845 0.753 1.222 1.492

Goh JC et al. Effect of femoral rotation on bone mineral density measurements with dual energy x-ray absorptiometry *Calcif Tissue Int* 57: 340-343, 1995.

## Synthesis of Images, BMD & Med Hx.



SLE, long-term GCC

Lt. FN: T-Score = +2.2

Rt. FN: T-Score = -1.3

Mean FN T-score = +0.4

Mean Tot T-score = -0.9



Region	BMD	т	Z	Region	BMD	Т	z	
Neck	0.705	-1.30 83%	-0.94 87%	Neck	1.092	+2.19 129%	+2.55 135%	
Troch	0.732	+0.29 104%	+0.46 107%	Troch	0.670	-0.33 95%	-0.16 98%	Γ
Inter	1.107	+0.05 101%	+0.16 102%	Inter	1.027	-0.47 93% (35.0)	-0.36 95%	
TOTAL	0.932	-0.08 99%	+0.15 102%	TOTAL	0.930	-0.10 99% (25.0)	+0.13 102%	
Ward's	0.591	-1.22 81% (25.0)	-0.48 91%	Ward's	1.062	+2.81 145% (25.0)	+3.54 164%	

## Where's Waldo? – A case of TMI?

ANCILLARY RES	SULTS (D	ualFe	emur]					1			
Region	1 BMD (g/cm²)	You (%)	ng-Adult T-Score	.7 Age- (%)	3 Matched Z-Score	BM( (g)	C Are (cm <sup>2</sup>	a ²)			
Neck Left	0.752		-2.4	83	-1.2	4.7	6,2	2			
Neck Right	0.891	83	-1.4	99	-0.1	5.0	5.6	5			
Neck Mean	0.822	77	-1.9	91	-0.6	4.8	5.9				
Neck Diff.	0.139	13	1.1	15	1.1	0.3	0.6	5		X 12	
Upper Neck Left	0.591	65	-2.5	80	-1.1	2.1	3.5	5	A	<b>_</b>	
Upper Neck Right	0.721	79	-1.5	98	-0.1	2.0	2.8	B			
Upper Neck Mean	0.656	72	-2.0	89	-0.6	2.0	3.1	1			
Unger Neck Diff.	0.129	14	1.0	17	1.0	0.1	0.3	7 #			
			BM	Ď	Y	oung	-Adult	Age-	Matched	BMC	Area
legion			(g/cn	n²)	(9	%)	T-Score	(%)	Z-Score	(g)	(cm²)
Troch Left			0.83	0	8	9	-0.9	95	-0.4	36.5	44.0
Troch Right			0.89	6	9	6	-0.3	102	0.2	20.1	22.4
Troch Mean			0.86	3	9	3	-0.6	98	-0.1	28.3	33.2
- Troch Diff.			0.06	6		7	0.6	8	0.6	16.5	21.7
										الد الد د	

Common Artifacts That Affect BMD

- Internal artifacts
- External artifacts
- Serendipitous findings obligation to report?
- Implications for VFA

## Position of the Panniculus

2003



Single energy

Region	Area (cm <sup>2</sup> )	BMC (g)	BMD (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	T - score
Neck	5.36	4.24	0.790	-0.5
Total	36.88	36.41	0.987	0.4



2012

67", 260 pounds

Single energy

Region	Area (cm <sup>2</sup> )	BMC (g)	BMD (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	T - score
Neck	5.35	4.24	0.793	-0.5
Total	37.41	36.79	0.984	0.3

## Position of the Panniculus

Single energy

4.24

BMC BMD

36.41 0.987

(g)  $(g/cm^2)$ 

0.790

Region

Neck

Area

5.36

36.88

 $(cm^2)$ 

2003



2012



#### Single energy

Region	Area (cm <sup>2</sup> )	BMC (g)	BMD (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	T - score	
Neck	5.35	4.24	0.793	-0.5	
Total	37.41	36.79	0.984	0.3	

#### 67", 260 pounds

T -

score

-0.5

0.4

Journal of Clinical Densitometry, vol. 6, no. 3, 199–204, 2003 © Copyright 2003 by Humana Press Inc. All rights of any nature whatsoever reserved. 1094-6950/03/6:199–204/\$25.00

#### **Original Article**

#### An Overlying Fat Panniculus Affects Femur Bone Mass Measurement

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#### Abstract

Dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA) is currently the gold standard technique for osteoporosis diagnosis. However, DXA has limitations, including artifacts, such as degenerative disease or metallic foreign bodies, that may confound bone mineral density (BMD) results. Because fat folds overlying the proximal femur may alter soft-tissue density in a nonuniform manner, this may be a currently unappreciated confounder of proximal femur BMD measurement. This possibility was evaluated in 127 patients (52 women/75 men) referred for routine BMD measurement who were identified as having a fat panniculus overlying their proximal femur scan area. Presence of a fat panniculus within the scan field was confirmed by visual assessment of images obtained utilizing a GE Lunar Expert-XL. Subsequently, these individuals were rescanned while retracting their fat panniculus away from the femur scan area without other repositioning between scans. In 49% of the men, and 56% of the women, either the femoral neck, trochanter, or total femur BMD differed by more than the least significant change at our facility. No pattern was observed to predict whether BMD would increase or decrease upon fat retraction. Subsequently, 30 patients were scanned using the standard and retracted technique twice, with repositioning between scans to establish precision. Retracted and standard precision was similar. In conclusion, an overlying fat panniculus may alter proximal femur BMD measurement, which would be expected to impair the ability to accurately diagnose low bone mass and monitor osteoporosis therapy. When a fat panniculus overlays the proximal femur scan area, its retraction should be part of routine densitometric practice.

Key Words: Bone density; obesity; DXA; femur.

## Surgical Hardware



- Vertebral levels that include an artifact should be excluded
- ISCD recommends a minimum of 2 vertebra for diagnosis and monitoring.
- They don't need to be contiguous.
- This spine is not diagnostic, and an alternative site should be measured

## Which analysis is more correct?



# Analysis and Reporting Issues

## Insufficient Anatomy





Right = -0.3	Left = 0.8	Date
Age (years) Hip Axis Length	Age (years) Comparison (mm)	Measured
0.343 -5 20 40 60 80 100	-2 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86	
0.482 -4	-1	
0.621 Left -3		
0.760 Osteopenia -2		Difference
0.899 Right -1	1	Mean
1.038 0	2	Right
1.177	3	Neck
1.316 Normal 2	4	Region
Densitometry Ref: Neck (BMD) BMD (g/cm <sup>2</sup> ) YA T-score	Trend: Neck Left (BMD) %Change vs Baseline	

(Right = 101.6 mm) (Mean = 101.9 mm) (I

COMMENTS:

Region	BMD <sup>1</sup> (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	2 Young-Adult T-score	Age-Matched Z-score
Neck			-
Left	0.723	-2.3	0.1
Right	0.738	-2.2	0.3
Mean	0.731	-2.2	0.2
Difference	0.015	0.1	0.1

Age (years)		Trend: Neck Left Change vs					
nm)	Measured Date	Age (years)	BMD (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	Previous (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	Previous (%)		
	6/23/2011	85.7	0.723	-0.008	-1.1		
20 30	6/22/2009	83.7	0.731	0.026	3.7		
eft = 102.7 mm)	6/21/2007	81.7	0.705	0.000	0.0		
	12/6/2004	79.2	0.705	-	-		

## Insufficient Anatomy





Not scanning down far enough in the hip is a common error on GE Healthcare scan

# Never Sign a Report Without Seeing the Images (1)

	Ŭ	Patient:		·· ·· ·
Dear Dr. John		Name:		James
Your patient James	completed a BMD test at our fac	Patient ID:		
Patient: Name: Patient ID:	James	Date of Birth:	:	06/05/1921
Date of Birth: Gender:	06/05/1921 Male	Gender:		Male
Indications: Fractures: Treatments:	None None None			
Results:	TYONG	Indications:		None
Scan Type AP Spine	Region Measured   L2-L4 10/08/2003	Fractures:		None
	Total Mean 10/08/2003	Treatments:		None
World Health Org, Normal: Osteopenia: Osteoporosis:	anization - Definition of Osteoporos T-Score at or above -1 T-Score between -1 and T-Score at or below -2.	2.5 SD SD		
Region	Measur	ed Age	BMD	T-Score
L2-L4	10/08/20	<b>0</b> 3 <b>8</b> 2.3	$995 \text{ mg/cm}^2$	-1.6
Total Mean	10/08/20	<b>0</b> 3 <b>8</b> 2.3	957 mg/cm <sup>2</sup>	-0.6

## Look for discordance in T-scores



Region	BMD	<b>T-score</b>	Z-score
L1	0.729	-3.6	-3.0
L2	0.897	-2.9	-2.3
L3	0.999	-2.0	-1.5
L4	1.188	-0.4	+0.1
L2-L4	1.045	-1.6	-1.1

L1-L3 0.871 -2.8 -2.3

## Look for discordance between hips



## Specific Disease States

## What is the diagnosis?







#### **Answer: Osteopoikilosis**

A core needle bone biopsy of the pelvis was performed. Hemato-pathology report of bone marrow revealed no evidence for metastatic cancer, plasma cell dysplasia or features suggestive of Paget's disease.

The bone sample revealed sclerotic bone within the bone marrow suggestive of osteopoikilosis.

\*Lagier R, Mbakop A, Bigler A. Osteopoikilosis: a radiological and pathological study. Skeletal Radiol 1984;11:161-168 What is this diagnosis?

## What is your diagnosis?



Image not for diagnostic use



Paget's Disease

Lumbar Spine AP Lat L5-S1 with Obliques

Findings/Conclusion: Pagetoid appearance of the L3 and L4 vertebral bodies. Advanced joint space height loss at L1-L2, L4-L5 and L5-S1. No acute compression deformity.

Dell;Atti C. et al. The Spine In Paget's Disease. Skeletal Radiol 36: 609-626, 2007

## VFA Imaging in suspected compression fx's



Region	Area (cm²)	BMC (g)	BMD (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	T - score
L1	14.54	13.13	0.904	-0.9
L2	14.12	18.25	1.293	1.8
L3	14.65	17.42	1.189	0.8
L4	17.46	18.17	1.041	-0.9
Total	60.76	66.97	1.102	0.1





Region	Area (cm²)	BMC (g)	BMD (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	T - score
L1	11.53	9.40	0.816	-1.6
L2	12.47	11.28	0.905	-1.1
L3	12.64	12.45	0.985	-0.9
L4	12.96	10.48	0.808	-2.3
L1-L2	24.00	20.69	0.862	-1.1



## What is your diagnosis?



#### **Sickle Cell Disease**

Region	Area (cm <sup>2</sup> )	BMC (g)	BMD (g/cm <sup>2</sup> )	T - score	PR (%)	Z - score	AM (%)
L1	12.95	20.75	1.602	4.8	149	3.9	137
L2	13.74	21.63	1.575	4.4	144	3,4	131
L3	14.02	21.86	1.559	4.1	141	3.2	129
L4	15.98	25.32	1.584	4.5	145	3.5	132
Total	56.69	89.56	1.580	4.4	145	3.5	132

Rudy HL. Et all Review of sickle cell disease and spinal pathology. Global Spine 9: 761-766, 2019.

Ntagiopoulos PG. The "fish-vertebra" sign. Emerg Med J 24: 674-675, 2007.



## Where is it? What is it? Visual Challenge

Practicing visual identification of common hip and spine artifacts

























Partial sacralization of L5 with sclerotic articulation



















DXA Quality Matters!! Look At The Images! "You can observe a lot just by watching."

- Yogi Berra

