#FOLLOW: Implementation of a Follow-Up Program for Incidental Pulmonary Nodules

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Background

- Incidental pulmonary nodules = very common radiologic finding

- Fleischner Society guidelines → many patients need follow-up

- Despite recommending follow-up, many patients do not receive proper surveillance
Background

- Follow-up program created for incidental pulmonary nodules

#FOLLOW dictated at bottom of radiology report

Clinical nurse coordinators contact patients and/or providers to orchestrate follow-up

Patient returns for follow-up imaging
Background

• Follow-up program created for incidental pulmonary nodules

#FOLLOW dictated at bottom of radiology report

Clinical nurse coordinators contact patients when recommendation becomes overdue to orchestrate follow-up

Patient returns for follow-up imaging
Purpose

1. Assess #Follow as an "incidentaloma" follow-up program by determining how appropriately our department tags examinations with incidental pulmonary nodule(s) using "#Follow"

2. Determine the amount of clinically significant cancers detected in patients tagged by "#Follow"
Methods

- The software program *Illuminate* was used to search all cases for incidental pulmonary nodules
- Patients with known cancer excluded from study
Data Collection

- Adoption rate after implementation of #Follow

Weekly Cases Tagged at Start of Program - 2018
Data Collection

• How tagged patients appear in EMR
Results

CT chest examinations July 2018-June 2019 → Reports with incidental pulmonary nodules → Reports tagged with #Follow → Clinically significant cancers

2343 → 1405 → 236 (17%) → 9 (3.8%)
Conclusion

• Nonroutine Communication programs on follow-up recommendations are difficult to implement and require acceptance from radiologists as well as referring physicians

• #Follow use was limited, but may have provided a clinical judgement of high risk as 9 clinically significant cancers were found!

• Cancer detection rate (CDR) on tagged cases of 3.8% compares favorably to National Lung Screening Trial and other Low Dose CT data.

• Such programs have the potential to improve outcomes through earlier detection of malignancy