

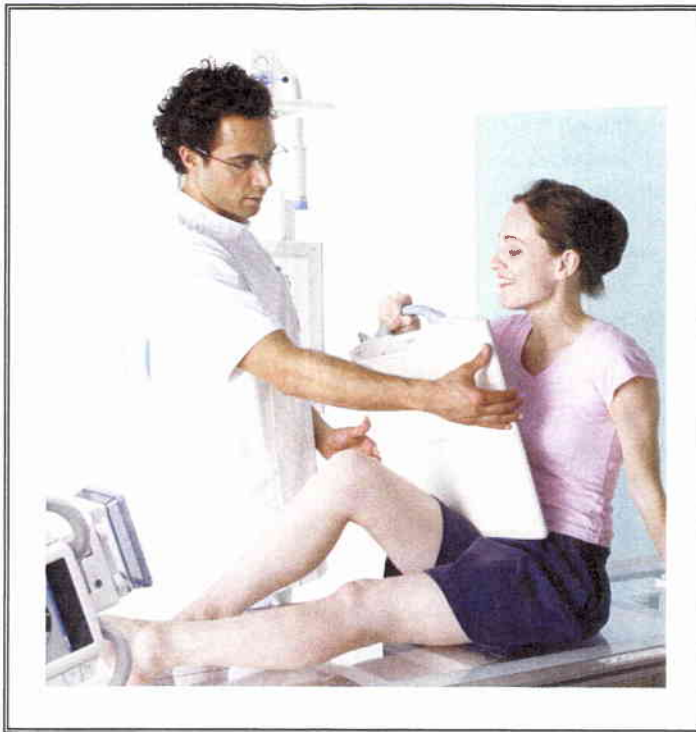
do a large number of full leg length and full spine studies," said Evans. "There's no efficient DR that can do that kind of imaging in one exposure. You're subject to multiple exposures with a moving apparatus." CR fit the bill. Because of the multiple cassettes, it's capable of multiple exposures, which are then stitched together. "The finished product is flexible," said Evans, "because it gives you one long

The physicians at Springfield are more than convinced by now. They are in fact eager to install the digital equipment at their other sites so they won't have to courier film between them. "We went from a department with four rooms to one with two rooms, but increased volume," Evans said. "Our orthopedic surgeon has probably the highest volume in the building. At first he wasn't a fan. But then he realized he

she purchased, and the fact that the Canon model doesn't require retrofitting the exam room, Wainio isn't sure there's a future for CR. "Both have their places," she said, "but in the future, I can see an industry that will be all DR. It makes sense from the speed perspective and the ergonomic perspective." She is especially convinced that "the future is DR" because of the flexibility of the tethered plate. "Before the tethered plate, CR was better," said Wainio, "but with the tethered plate, there isn't anything that CR can do that DR can't do." What will she do with her CR equipment as we approach an all-DR world? "We donate used equipment to third world countries. Every facility is different, but that's what we do."

A major factor contributing to her ability to purchase the DR equipment was the fact that the Canon model didn't require retrofitting the exam room. "The funding we received for this was predicated on the fact that no major construction to the room was required. We would not have received the funding otherwise. That's what made it affordable. And between installation and application, the room was down only six and a half days."

The flexibility of Canon's CXDI-50G Portable DR Sensor is demonstrated by positioning the plate to do a sunrise knee technique; and it offers the ability to retrofit existing x-ray equipment.



image, but you also have access to the individual images."

Despite the advantages of DR, which Evans acknowledges are primarily time efficiency and image quality, the new clinic uses CR for a wide variety of purposes. Examples include any kind of weight-bearing images, images of the feet, images of the spine related to scoliosis, and images of patients with limited movements.

Rolling Out Digital

Springfield's newest clinic is the only one in the system that currently uses any kind of digital. But more are on the way. "We'll be rolling out digital over the years," said Evans. "Where I can go strictly digital, I will. But some will have to have CR as well, especially the smaller units with smaller volume."

was looking at images on the monitor before I could walk the patient back from the exam room."

→ Lori Wainio is the assistant director of diagnostic imaging for Kaiser Permanente in Northern California. Her decision to go with a DR system by Canon had to do not only with increased productivity and greater speed, but also with the health of her technicians. "We've seen a mitigation of ergonomics issues with DR that are not mitigated with CR," said Wainio. Every image made with CR requires a technician to handle cassettes five times. In a busy clinic, each technician is handling 60 to 80 patients per day. Earlier this year, two technicians suffered repetitive motion injuries. "With DR that is now mitigated," she said.

Given the speed of the DR system

X-ray Is Fun Again

Wainio's technicians are enthusiastic as well. Four of them have done the training for DR, and all four picked it up very easily. One even commented that x-ray was fun again. For Wainio, the upside of a very low learning curve is that the techs can give more focus to their patients.

In terms of the future, Wainio can't imagine that imaging will get any faster than it is now with DR, but she's sure that things can only get better than they are. She has some thoughts on what the R&D guys in the industry should be focusing on, however. "I'd like to see them working on ways to decrease x-ray exposure doses. That would definitely make the techs' jobs easier. I would say that's the next thing to work on." ← End

Rick Perez is the administrative director at Winthrop University Medical Center in Mineola, NY. Perez supervises a department that uses Carestream digital imaging, and, as