

PRESS RELEASE

Innovative Physical Therapy, LLC

560 Broadview Ave, Suite 201 Warrenton, VA 20186

www.innovativeptllc.com

Phone: (540) 347-4005

Fax: (540) 645-6093

Warrenton, October 2019

Physical Therapists Appropriately Order Imaging and Use it to Improve Treatment

Because the majority of states have direct access laws, physical therapists are becoming the practitioner of choice for musculoskeletal injuries. This responsibility has led to increasing use of imaging by therapists. Many PTs have access to musculoskeletal ultrasound, and some ACOs have allowed therapists to order advanced imaging like CT scans or MRIs.

One place that PTs have long been the entry point for musculoskeletal injuries with the ability to order images is the US military. Injured soldiers are frequently sent directly to a therapist without being seen by a primary care physician. Because of this, the military is a good example of how PTs can function as a primary care practitioners. A 2016 study in the International Journal of Sports Physical Therapy took a look at how PTs used their imaging privileges and found the following:

- PT orders for imaging were appropriate in over 80% of cases according to the criteria of the American College of Radiology. Other studies have found values between 50% and 74% for primary care physicians
- Physical Therapists do not appear to overuse imaging, ordering MRI or MRA in 8% of cases.
- This study found that PTs had their diagnosis confirmed by MRI 65% of the time and surgery 90% of the time. This is similar to the 75-80% accuracy rates other studies have found

Overall, this study appears to show that physical therapists can function well as the primary provider for musculoskeletal injuries. They tend to have high diagnostic accuracy rates, and when given imaging privileges, they use them conservatively and appropriately. This leads to lower costs and more efficient care for patients. It's no wonder the private sector is starting to catch up to the military and use physical therapists as the first line of treatment for musculoskeletal injuries.

About The Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association

Founded in 1956, the Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association champions the success of physical therapist-owned businesses. Our members are leaders and innovators in the health care system. The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) represents more than 85,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants and students of physical therapy nationwide. For more information, please visit www.ppsapta.org.