

## **A patient medical imaging referral support system based on medical-managerial and patient-safety criteria**

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### **Abstract**

The German Commission on Radiological Protection has worked out guidance on radiological and nuclear medical examinations in Germany, on behalf of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety in 2006. The Recommendations are continuously being adjusted to the actual state of medical science and technology, taking into account the constructive proposals for amendments and improvements, contributed by physicians, scientific organizations and working groups. We have obtained the permission and translated into Greek the updated version of this guidance and we have combined it with the Greek translation of the WHO ICD-10 and the Greek DRGs-alike “KEN” Codification. The resulting in system constitutes a convenient Medical Imaging referral-tool for every Clinician, nevertheless, particularly helpful for the primary-care Practitioners. The developed tool supports, first, referral decision-making support based on collectively and thoroughly peer-reviewed Recommendations, second, appropriate selection of the imaging-technique ranking and sequencing, with regard to diagnostic efficiency, combined with patient-safety and finally, acquaintance of the medical personnel with the inevitable, in contemporary medical practice, employment of established codifications and classifications of diagnostic procedures and the associated costs for the Greek National Health System.

**Key words:** Medical Imaging referral-tool, codifications and classifications of diagnostic procedures, DRGs, KEN, patient-safety.

### **Introduction**

The German Commission on Radiological Protection has worked out guidance on radiological and nuclear medical examinations in Germany, on behalf of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety in 2006. The Recommendations are continuously being adjusted to the actual state of medical science and technology, taking into account the constructive proposals for amendments and improvements, contributed by physicians, scientific organizations and working groups.

We have obtained the permission to translate into Greek the updated version of the guidance that was passed by the German Strahlenschutzkommission (SSK) [1] as a Recommendation (231-Meeting 09-10/12/2013) and we have combined it with the Greek translation of the WHO ICD-10 and the Greek DRG-alike “KEN” Codification [2]. The resulting in system constitutes a convenient Medical Imaging referral-tool for every Clinician, nevertheless, particularly helpful for the primary-care Practitioners. The developed tool supports:

- Referral decision-making support based on collectively and thoroughly

peer-reviewed Recommendations.

- Appropriate selection of the imaging-technique ranking and sequencing, with regard to diagnostic efficiency, combined with patient-safety.
- Acquaintance of medical personnel with the in evitable, in contemporary medical practice, employment of established codifications and classifications of diagnostic procedures and the associated costs for the Greek National Health System.

### **The aim of the guidelines**

A test is useful when its positive or negative outcome confirms or excludes a medical diagnostic assumption. Several Radiology or Nuclear Medicine examinations do not meet these conditions and could lead to unnecessary radiation exposure of patients. Thus, many unnecessary tests could be avoided, without compromising the quality of patient care. For example, examinations carried out previously, e.g. in another Hospital or Outpatient Department, should be searched for and retrieved, since Radiology Information Systems (RIS) and Picture and Archiving Computerized Systems (PACS), are provided gradually in all facilities.

Conducting tests whose outcome probably does not affect the handling of the incident, such as, finding degenerative vertebral lesions in middle age, or tests in which a positive result is highly unlikely, normally have no diagnostic value, however, expose the patient unnecessarily. Finally, frequent examinations, that is, before any progress or remission, or completion of the expected outcome of a treatment would have the time to take effect, should also be avoided.

Imaging technology is evolving rapidly. This can be very useful, if its employment consideration has been previously discussed with a Radiologist or a Nuclear Medicine specialist, before requested by the referring general practitioner. Anyway, about this examination, the referring physician ultimately decides and carries the responsibility, if this is the most appropriate test. In that case, targeted clinical information is able to clarify what is asked for, avoiding technical error (e.g. essential omission beam path).

Some physicians rely more frequently than other ones on imaging methods and some patients wish more often exams. Are we “consuming” too many tests and how is the advice of the referring physician taken into account? In some clinical situations, there are definite indications for Radiological or Nuclear Medicine examinations, notified within various guidelines or directives by competent professional associations. These recommendations support the physician, in a given clinical situation, to make a correct decision, for his patient. Obviously, the recommendations do not impose a rigid examination procedures framework, but they suggest actions, based on both, medical knowledge (expertise), and experience (diagnostic feeling). Implementing the recommendations, the individual patient's condition should always be taken into account. A general rule cannot predict all “real world” situations and in case of doubt, a consultation with the specialist conducting the examination, is always a good idea.

Any device that performs X-ray imaging examinations should follow the Radiation Protection Regulations for medical examinations, often made in accordance with work-flow instructions, commonly known as Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). For this reason, instructions on how to perform a specific test are not referred to. It is sufficient to note that the tests can be optimized, when the information necessary to answer the question posed, are resulting in, from minimal radiation exposure. This

detail is important, because sometimes the referring physician does not receives the expected radiological shots.

| A. Κεφαλή (+ ΗΣΑ Προβλήματα)  |  |                                |  |
|---|--|--------------------------------|--|
| Σξέταση εζολογής W: Σξέταση 2 <sup>η</sup> γραμμής S: Εδωσή εξέταση N: Δεν ενδεικνύεται |  |                                |  |
| Κλινικό Ερώτημα   | Απεικονιστική εξέταση                        | Βεβήρος Σξέτασης               | Σξόλο  |
| γενεής νοσήματα πλαιδιά βλστε MI)   | MRI<br>CT                                    | P<br>W                         | Καλύτερη απεικόνιση δυσπλασιών<br>Εξέταση για βλάβες οστών   |
| εμφάτω  | CT<br><br>FKDS της αορτής,<br>TCD<br><br>MRI | P<br><br>P<br><br>W<br><br>W,S | Επιβεβαίωση ή αποκλεισμο<br>αμφορσής (ενδεξημένος CT-<br>αγγειογραφία)<br><br>Για ασθενείς που θα υποβληθούν<br>σε χειρουργείο αποκλειστικής<br>στενώσης κορωαίων, για<br>εμφάτω στενώσει με υπόνοια<br>δυσχρωσμού ή εμφόλου<br><br>Στα πλαίσια της διαγνωστικής<br>διευκρίνισης παθήσεων αγγείων<br>ΚΝΣ, ενόλυστων MRI ή CTA<br><br>Σε πρώτο στάδιο εμφάτω<br>επισοδίου ή σε βλάβες στον<br>οπίσθο βόθορο, η MRI είναι πιο<br>εξέστητη από τη CT, ειδικά για<br>πρώτη διαγνωση, όταν τεχνικές<br>απεικόνισης διαθέσιμες |

  

| A. Kopf (einschließlich HNO-Probleme)  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| P: Primärforschung W: Weiterführende Untersuchung S: Spezialverfahren N: Nicht indiziert |   |   |   |
| Klinische Fragestellung  | Bildgebendes Untersuchungsverfahren   | Grad der Empfehlung                               | Kommentar   |
| A1<br>Kongenitale Erkrankungen<br>(bei Kindern siehe MI)                                 | MRT<br>CT   | P<br>W  | Definitiver Nachweis von Fehlbildungen<br>Beurteilung von Knochenanomalien  |
| A2<br>Apoplexie; Schlaganfall  | CT<br><br>FKDS der A.<br>carotis, ggf.<br>TCD<br><br>MRT<br><br>TCD<br><br>Echokardi-<br>graphie<br><br>DSA | P<br><br>P<br><br>W, S<br><br>W<br><br>W<br><br>S | Nachweis oder Ausschluss einer Blutung (ggf. CT-<br>Angiographie)<br><br>Bei vollständig genesenen Patienten, bei denen eine<br>Carotischirurgie erwogen wird.<br>Bei einer sich entwickelnden Apoplexie mit Verdacht auf eine<br>Dissektion oder einen Embolus<br><br>Als ergänzende Gefäßdiagnostik bei zerebrovaskulären<br>Erkrankungen, alternativ MRA oder CTA<br><br>Bei frühem Infarkt und bei Läsionen im Bereich der hinteren<br>Schädelgrube (Fossa cranii posterior) ist die MRT sensitiver<br>als die CT, besonders in der Frühdiagnostik, wenn Diffusions-<br>/ Perfusionenbildung zur Verfügung stehen<br><br>Frage nach Stenose / Emboliequelle an den Hirnbasisarterien<br><br>Suche nach kardialen Emboliequellen<br><br>Zur interventionellen Therapie s. N8 |

Figure 1. Two snapshots of the German prototype and the Greek translation of the recommendations.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>A. Head and ENT .</b><br/><b>B. Neck.</b><br/><b>C. Spinal Cord.</b><br/><b>D. Skeleton and Musculature.</b><br/><b>E. Cardiovascular System.</b><br/><b>F. Thorax.</b><br/><b>G. Gastro-Interstitial System.</b><br/><b>H. Urogenital-System.</b><br/><b>I. Gynecology and Obstetrics.</b><br/><b>J. Breast.</b><br/><b>K. Trauma.</b><br/><b>L. Oncology.</b><br/><b>M. Pediatrics.</b><br/><b>N. Interventional Radiology.</b></p> |  <p style="text-align: right;">Strahlenschutzkommission<br/><small>Österreichische<br/>Gesellschaft für<br/>Strahlenschutz<br/>Präsident: Dr. Dr. Dr.<br/>Friedrich G. Huber<br/>http://www.ssk.at</small></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Orientierungshilfe<br/>für bildgebende Untersuchungen</b><br/>– Einleitung und Tabellen –<br/>Empfehlung der Strahlenschutzkommission</p> <hr/> <p style="font-size: small;">Verabschiedet in der 231. Sitzung der Strahlenschutzkommission am 9./10.12.2008.<br/>Kapitel 7 geändert in der 243. Sitzung der Strahlenschutzkommission am 14./17. September 2010</p> |
|---|--|

Figure 2. The Structure of the SSK-Guidance.

### Whom are the guidelines addressed to?

The guidelines are intended for physicians who refer in- and out-patients for imaging examinations. They do not replace the necessary evidence in accordance with the principles of radiation, i.e a specialist. From the existing range tests, the referring physician in consultation with the radiologist will decide to review, and taking into account the resources available. It would be desirable to have all physicians at the start of their training, to studying a copy of these recommendations. The structure of this guide consists of four columns:

- The first column shows the clinical question for which would indicate a test;

- The second column lists the possible imaging techniques;
- The third column contains recommendations, i.e. advice on whether a particular Radiological or Nuclear Medicine examination, is appropriate or not;
- The fourth column contains explanatory comments.

Following attributes are eligible for each case:

**Primary screening (P):** This is the test which should be done first and will probably lead to an adequately documented diagnosis.

**Indicated for further examination (W):** This examination should follow, when the primary examination has left open diagnostic questions. In difficult cases it advisable a contact between the referring physician and the imaging expert, radiology to clarify whether a specific test, can resolve the specific open questions.

**Specialized tests (S):** This category includes difficult and/or costly examinations. Such tests are usually performed on request of a specialist, who has the clinical experience required to evaluate the findings of the examination. Generally, the dialogue between the referring physician and the imaging expert is valuable.

**Not appropriate (N):** Examinations that are not expected, for the given clinical situation, to provide a substantial effect or are obsolete (e.g. excretory Urography in question hypertension).

During pregnancy **fetal radiation exposure** should be avoided whenever possible. This also applies in cases where a pregnancy is unwanted. The responsibility for establishing any existing pregnancy belongs to the physician requesting the imaging examination. In any case, women of childbearing age before taking an imaging examination with ionizing radiation, they should be asked whether they are pregnant or may be pregnant. If the patient can not rule out a pregnancy, assessment should, if possible, be postponed until the start of next menstrual circle.

**Table 1.** Typical effective Doses (mSv) 2-level Thorax and natural exposure equivalent of X-Ray (left) and Nuclear Medicine (right) examinations as displayed in the original SSK-guidance.

| Röntgenuntersuchungen: <sup>2</sup>    | D <sub>eff</sub> (mSv) | 2-level Thorax equivalent | Natural exposure equiv. |
|--|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Extremitäten und Gelenke (außer Hüfte) | 0,01                   | 0,1                       | 1,5 Tage                |
| Thorax (einzelne p.a.-Aufnahme)        | 0,04                   | 0,4                       | 7 Tage                  |
| Thorax in 2 Ebenen                     | 0,1                    | 1                         | 15 Tage                 |
| Schädel                                | 0,07                   | 0,7                       | 12 Tage                 |
| Brustwirbelsäule                       | 0,7                    | 7                         | 4 Monate                |
| Lendenwirbelsäule                      | 1,3                    | 13                        | 7 Monate                |
| Hüfte                                  | 0,3                    | 3                         | 7 Wochen                |
| Becken                                 | 0,7                    | 7                         | 4 Monate                |
| Abdomen                                | 1,0                    | 10                        | 6 Monate                |
| Mammographie bds. 2 Ebenen             | 0,5                    | 5                         | 3 Monate                |
| Ausscheidungsurografie                 | 2,5                    | 25                        | 14 Monate               |
| Barium-Bolus                           | 1,5                    | 15                        | 9 Monate                |
| Bariumbrei                             | 3                      | 30                        | 17 Monate               |
| Bariumeinlauf                          | 7                      | 70                        | 3,3 Jahre               |
| CT - Kopf                              | 2,3                    | 23                        | 1,1 Jahr                |
| CT - Thorax                            | 8                      | 80                        | 3,8 Jahre               |
| CT - Abdomen oder Becken               | 10                     | 100                       | 4,8 Jahre               |
| CT - Ganzkörper <sup>3</sup>           | 14                     | 140                       | 6,7 Jahre               |

| Nuklearmedizinische Untersuchungen: <sup>4</sup>                  | D <sub>eff</sub> (mSv) | 2-level Thorax equivalent | Natural exposure equiv. <sup>1</sup> |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Nierenfunktionszintigraphie (100 MBq Tc-99m-MAG3)                 | 0,7                    | 7                         | 4 Monate                             |
| Schilddrüsenzintigraphie (75 MBq Tc-99m)                          | 1,0                    | 10                        | 5,7 Monate                           |
| Lungenperfusionsszintigraphie (100 MBq Tc-99m-Micropartikel)      | 1,1                    | 11                        | 6,3 Monate                           |
| Skelettszintigraphie (500 MBq Tc-99m-Phosphonat)                  | 2,9                    | 29                        | 1,4 Jahre                            |
| Hirnszintigraphie (550 MBq Tc-99m-HMPAO o.ä.)                     | 5,1                    | 51                        | 2,4 Jahre                            |
| Myocardperfusionsszintigraphie (600 MBq Tc-99m-MIBI) <sup>5</sup> | 5,4                    | 54                        | 2,6 Jahre                            |
| Positronen-Emissions-Tomographie (200 MBq F-18-FDG)               | 3,8                    | 38                        | 1,8 Jahre                            |

However, it is quite likely that the proposed consideration for the mother or possibly the unborn child is so significant that the delay be deceiving. In this case, the justified indication of the expert physician is particularly important to gauge the risk to mother and fetus, and he should ensure that the examination will be carried out with the minimal possible radiation exposure. Nevertheless, the risk of all available radiological examinations, even those with relatively high exposure to radiation, is so small, that does not justify invasive fetal diagnostic procedures (such as amniocentesis), because the risk of these processes exceeds by far that of exposure to

radiation. Finally, the contrast injection during the entire pregnancy should be avoided.

Despite the fact that under the right clue referral, benefits in relation to the risk of radiation exposure prevail, even small doses of radiation is not without risks. Diagnostic Radiology is by far the first radiation exposure source for the general public, and it amounts (German Parliamentary Report 2007 by the German Federal Ministry (BMU)) half of the total annual per capita dose of the population, arising from environmental radioactivity and all other sources of ionizing radiation, which is about 2.1mSv/y.

In this report, the ratio corresponding to CT-scans is continuously increasing. Any unnecessary exposure and especially unnecessary repeat examinations should be avoided and the choice examinations should be tailored to the particular patient, to reduce exposure to unnecessary radiation. On the other hand, excessive fear of radiation exposure should not lead to avoid necessary tests. Typical values of effective dose for frequent examinations in Radiology and Nuclear Medicine are summarized in Table 1.

The EU Council Directive 97/43/EURATOM invited the Member States, beyond a series of measures improving Medical Radiation Protection, to create recommendations, taking into account the medical report. European Union working-groups have already created Guidelines of similar content, however, based on existing guidance in England. We have translated the recommendations of the German Commission on Radiological Protection (SSK) into the Greek language and we shall make it available online to every interested health-care professional. From own experience in Germany, concerning the SSK contribution in Radiation Protection, we hope that the Guidance will become a useful tool, in the field of Medical Imaging.

**Table 2.** Two excerpts of the translated SSK-Guidance concerning Head and ENT (left) and combining X-Rays, CT, MRI & PET (right).

| Α. Κεφάλι (και Προβλήματα ΩΡΛ)                   |                                   |                  |   | R0               | P | Τοπική βλάβη  |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------|---|------------------|---|---|
| Περίεργη εξέταση                                 | W: εξέταση 2 <sup>η</sup> γραμμής | Σειριακή εξέταση | W: δεν ενδείκνυται  |                  |   |   |
| Κλινικό Ερώτημα                                  | Απεικονιστική Εξέταση             | Βαθμός Συστάσης  | Σχόλιο  |                  |   |   |
| A1<br>Εκ γενετής νοσήματα<br>(Για παιδιά βλ. M1) | MRI<br>CT                         | P<br>W           | Καλύτερη απεικόνιση των δυσπλασιών. Εκτίμηση για βλάβες των οστών.  | MRT              | W | Εμφάνοντα ενοχλήματα και αρνητικά R0 ευρήματα   |
|  | CT                                | P                | Επιβεβαίωση ή αποκλεισμός αιμορραγίας (ενδοχρημικός CT-αγγειογραφία)  | PET/CT           | W | Με FDG ως εναλλακτική όταν η MRI δεν είναι εφικτή   |
| A2<br>Εγκεφαλικό                                 | FKDS της αορτής,<br>TCD           | P                | Για ασθενείς που θα υποβληθούν σε χειρουργείο αποκτάστασης στενώσης καρωτίδων, για εγκεφαλικό επεισόδιο με ύπνοια διαχωρισμού ή εμβόλου | R0 του σκελετού  | P | Ανίχνευση περιοχών για τις οποίες η ακτινοθεραπεία θα μπορούσε να είναι χρήσιμη, σταδιοποίηση   |
|  |                                   | W                |   | CT               | P | Χωρίς σκιαγραφικό, πολλαπλών τομών  |
|  |                                   |                  |   | MRT              | W | Χρήσιμη σε μη εκκριτικό μυέλωμα και αρνητικές οστικές μεταστάσεις, για εκτίμηση της καρκινικής μάζας, σε περίπτωση που είναι δυνατή ολοσωματική MRI |
|  |                                   |                  |   | Πυρηνική ιατρική | S | FDG-PET για τη διάγνωση μυελώματος, σε περίπτωση που η MRI/ MDCT δεν είναι αποσαφηνιστική   |

## The Greek medical-managerial codifications

During the still ongoing financial crisis, the Greek Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, has finally accelerated the efforts to centralize and rationalize the country's National Health System (ESY) by introducing electronic processing and information management systems, accessing information and electronic communication, in order to support healthcare services to both the public and third parties and to decrease the operational cost of the public NHS. Further, electronic transmission of information and documents, intended to increase the quality of services, will be provided, by the completion of this project.

The introduction of the planned information management and business intelligence

systems, will promote functional cooperation of the Health Unit, the Regional Health Authorities and the central services. Further, these mechanisms will facilitate:

- Functional services concerning personnel administration, accounting function and financial management and budget issues.
- Handling and management of patients.
- The fulfillment of the requirements for homogenization of all measurable quantities i.e. materials, supplies, medicaments, hospital fees etc. managed by health units.
- Unified management of patients.

The adoption of international classification and codification standards (e.g., ICD-10, AR-DRGs etc.) is a cardinal prerequisite for the successful development of the above outlined ambitious project. The adoption, the translation and the, for the present rather slow, employment of these standards have created the conditions for us, to combine them with the translated SSK Guidance, allowing for an improvement of the results of its employment, as described in the next paragraphs.

### Combining the SSK-guidance with adopted Greek codifications

Based on the experience gained from DRGs-related research [3]-[11], we have chosen from the above mentioned Greek medical-managerial codifications and classifications the following three to be combined with the translated SSK Guidance, in order to create a new and helpful referral software tool:

- The Greek Medical Procedures Codification Part 3: “Imaging – Diagnostic and Therapeutic Radiological Procedures” (Codes 6609-7468).
- The Greek translation of the WHO ICD-10.
- The Greek DRG-alike KEN Classification.

**Table 3.** An excerpt of the Greek Medical Procedures Codification (GMPC).

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| κ643199 | ΕΝΔΟΒΡΟΓΧΙΚΟ ΥΠΕΡΧΟΓΡΑΦΗΜΑ (ΕΒUS) ΚΑΤΑ ΤΗ ΔΙΑΡΚΕΙΑ ΒΡΟΓΧΟΣΚΟΠΙΚΗΣ ΔΙΑΓΝΩΣΤΙΚΗΣ Ή ΘΕΡΑΠΕΥΤΙΚΗΣ ΕΠΕΜΒΑΣΗΣ(ΕΙΣ) (ΚΑΤΑΓΡΑΦΕΤΑΙ ΞΕΧΩΡΙΣΤΑ ΜΑΖΙ ΜΕ ΤΟΥΣ ΚΩΔΙΚΟΥΣ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΑΡΧΙΚΗ ΔΙΑΔΙΚΑΣΙΑ[ΕΣ]) |
| κ643203 | ΒΡΟΓΧΟΣΚΟΠΗΣΗ, ΜΕ ΑΚΑΜΠΤΟ Ή ΕΥΚΑΜΠΤΟ ΒΡΟΓΧΟΣΚΟΠΙΟ, ΜΕ Ή ΧΩΡΙΣ ΑΚΤΙΝΟΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΚΑΘΟΔΗΓΗΣΗ. ΔΙΑΓΝΩΣΤΙΚΗ, ΜΕ Ή ΧΩΡΙΣ ΛΗΨΗ ΚΥΤΤΑΡΩΝ ΜΕ ΕΚΠΛΥΣΗ (WASHING) (ΞΕΧΩΡΙΣΤΗ ΔΙΑΔΙΚΑΣΙΑ)                 |
| κ643205 | ΒΡΟΓΧΟΣΚΟΠΗΣΗ, ΜΕ ΑΚΑΜΠΤΟ Ή ΕΥΚΑΜΠΤΟ ΒΡΟΓΧΟΣΚΟΠΙΟ, ΜΕ Ή ΧΩΡΙΣ ΑΚΤΙΝΟΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΚΑΘΟΔΗΓΗΣΗ. ΜΕ ΒΟΥΡΤΣΙΣΜΑ (BRUSHING) Ή ΠΡΟΣΤΑΤΕΥΜΕΝΟ ΒΟΥΡΤΣΙΣΜΑ (BRUSHING)                                    |
| κ643207 | ΒΡΟΓΧΟΣΚΟΠΗΣΗ, ΜΕ ΑΚΑΜΠΤΟ Ή ΕΥΚΑΜΠΤΟ ΒΡΟΓΧΟΣΚΟΠΙΟ, ΜΕ Ή ΧΩΡΙΣ ΑΚΤΙΝΟΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΚΑΘΟΔΗΓΗΣΗ. ΜΕ ΒΡΟΓΧΙΚΗ ΚΥΨΕΛΙΔΙΚΗ ΕΚΠΛΥΣΗ (LAVAGE)   |
| κ643209 | ΒΡΟΓΧΟΣΚΟΠΗΣΗ, ΜΕ ΑΚΑΜΠΤΟ Ή ΕΥΚΑΜΠΤΟ ΒΡΟΓΧΟΣΚΟΠΙΟ, ΜΕ Ή ΧΩΡΙΣ ΑΚΤΙΝΟΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΚΑΘΟΔΗΓΗΣΗ. ΜΕ ΒΡΟΓΧΙΚΗ Ή ΕΝΔΟΒΡΟΓΧΙΚΗ ΒΙΟΨΙΑ(ΕΣ), ΕΝΑ Ή ΠΟΛΛΑΠΛΑ ΣΗΜΕΙΑ                                      |
| κ643215 | ΒΡΟΓΧΟΣΚΟΠΗΣΗ, ΜΕ ΑΚΑΜΠΤΟ Ή ΕΥΚΑΜΠΤΟ ΒΡΟΓΧΟΣΚΟΠΙΟ, ΜΕ Ή ΧΩΡΙΣ ΑΚΤΙΝΟΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΚΑΘΟΔΗΓΗΣΗ. ΜΕ ΔΙΑΒΡΟΓΧΙΚΗ ΒΙΟΨΙΑ(ΕΣ) ΠΝΕΥΜΟΝΑ, ΕΝΑΣ ΛΟΒΟΣ  |
|         | ΒΡΟΓΧΟΣΚΟΠΗΣΗ, ΜΕ ΑΚΑΜΠΤΟ Ή ΕΥΚΑΜΠΤΟ ΒΡΟΓΧΟΣΚΟΠΙΟ, ΜΕ Ή ΧΩΡΙΣ ΑΚΤΙΝΟΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΚΑΘΟΔΗΓΗΣΗ. ΜΕ ΔΙΑΒΡΟΓΧΙΚΗ ΒΙΟΨΙΑ(ΕΣ) ΜΕ ΒΕΛΟΝΗ   |

**Table 4.** An excerpt of the Greek Medical Procedures Codification Part 3: “Imaging – Diagnostic and Therapeutic Radiological Procedures” (Imaging subcategories & Codes 6609-7468)

| Γ.   | ΑΠΕΙΚΟΝΙΣΗ – ΕΠΕΜΒΑΤΙΚΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΘΕΡΑΠΕΥΤΙΚΕΣ ΑΚΤΙΝΙΚΕΣ ΠΡΑΞΕΙΣ              |               |
|------|--|---------------|
| Γ.1  | ΑΚΤΙΝΟΔΙΑΓΝΩΣΗ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΕΡΙΟΧΕΣ. ΔΙΑΦΟΡΕΣ ΜΕΘΟΔΟΙ                           | 6.609 – 6.848 |
| Γ.2  | ΕΠΕΜΒΑΤΙΚΗ ΑΚΤΙΝΟΛΟΓΙΑ ΓΑΣΤΡΕΝΤΕΡΙΚΟΥ                                    | 6.849 – 6.860 |
| Γ.3  | ΔΙΑΦΟΡΕΣ ΔΙΑΔΙΚΑΣΙΕΣ. ΑΓΓΕΙΟΓΡΑΦΙΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΚΤΙΝΟΛΟΓΙΚΕΣ ΕΠΕΜΒΑΣΕΙΣ ΑΓΓΕΙΩΝ | 6.861 – 6.973 |
| Γ.4  | ΑΚΤΙΝΟΣΚΟΠΗΣΕΙΣ  | 6.974 – 6.986 |
| Γ.5  | ΠΡΟΣΘΕΤΕΣ ΜΕΛΕΤΕΣ ΑΞΟΝΙΚΗΣ / ΜΑΓΝΗΤΙΚΗΣ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑΣ Κ.Λ.Π.               | 6.987 – 7.090 |
| Γ.6  | ΥΠΕΡΗΧΟΓΡΑΦΗΜΑΤΑ   | 7.091 – 7.161 |
| Γ.7  | ΑΚΤΙΝΟΛΟΓΙΚΕΣ ΚΑΘΟΔΗΓΗΣΕΙΣ   | 7.162 – 7.174 |
| Γ.8  | ΜΑΣΤΟΓΡΑΦΙΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΟΣΤΕΟΠΥΚΝΟΜΕΤΡΙΕΣ                                       | 7.175 – 7.194 |
| Γ.9  | ΠΑΙΔΙΑΤΡΙΚΗ ΑΚΤΙΝΟΛΟΓΙΑ  | 7.195 – 7.216 |
| Γ.10 | ΑΚΤΙΝΟΘΕΡΑΠΕΙΑ   | 7.217 – 7.295 |
| Γ.11 | ΠΥΡΗΝΙΚΗ ΙΑΤΡΙΚΗ   | 7.296 – 7.468 |

Joining the presented databases, we have developed simple software that allows, as a **first step**, for the combination of the SSK Recommendations with the Part 3 of the Greek Medical Procedures Codification (GMPC), concerning: “Imaging – Diagnostic and Therapeutic Radiological Procedures” (Code-Nr. 6609-7468). Thus, an appropriate GMPC-code is assigned to the SSK-recommended imaging referral. For example, a Brain-CT without contrast-media request, can be accompanied with a comment:

**“ΑΞΟΝΙΚΗ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΕΓΚΕΦΑΛΟΥ ΧΩΡΙΣ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ ΥΛΙΚΟ”**  
and the corresponding Code-Nr. 6643 and GMPC-code K500881 (cf. Table 7).

**Table 5.** An excerpt of the Greek translation of the WHO ICD-10 (Codes & Descriptions).

| ΤΕΛΙΚΗ ΟΝΟΜΑΣΙΑ   |
|---|
| C40 Κακοήθη νεοπλασμάτα των οστών και των αρθρικών χόνδρων των άκρων                            |
| C41 Κακοήθη νεοπλασμάτα των οστών και των αρθρικών χόνδρων άλλων και μη καθορισμένων εντοπίσεων |
| C43 Κακοήθες μελάνωμα του δέρματος  |
| C44 Άλλα κακοήθη νεοπλασμάτα του δέρματος   |
| C45 Μεσοθηλίωμα   |
| C46 Σάρκωμα καρκίνου  |
| C47 Κακοήθη νεοπλασμάτα των περιφερικών νεύρων και του αυτόνομου νευρικού συστήματος            |
| C48 Κακοήθη νεοπλασμάτα του οπισθοπεριτοναϊκού χώρου και του περιτοναίου                        |
| C49 Κακοήθη νεοπλασμάτα του συνδετικού ιστού και άλλων μαλακών μορίων                           |
| C50 Κακοήθη νεοπλασμάτα του μαστού  |
| C51 Κακοήθη νεοπλασμάτα του αιδοίου   |
| C52 Κακοήθη νεοπλασμάτα του κόλπου  |
| C53 Κακοήθη νεοπλασμάτα του τραχήλου της μήτρας   |
| C54 Κακοήθη νεοπλασμάτα του σώματος της μήτρας  |
| C55 Κακοήθη νεοπλασμάτα της μήτρας, μη καθορισμένου τμήματος (αυτής)                            |
| C56 Κακοήθη νεοπλασμάτα των ωοθηκών   |

**Table 6.** An excerpt of the Greek DRGs-alike KEN Classification (From the right: Code, Description, Remuneration per treatment and Mean length of stay).

| ΚΩΔΙΚΟΣ<br>KEN (*) | Κ.Ε.Ν. ΠΕΡΙΓΡΑΦΗ   | ΚΟΣΤΟΣ<br>ΑΝΑ ΚΕΝ | ΜΔΝ<br>(*) |
|--------------------|--|-------------------|------------|
| E-TKA              | Εκτός ταξινόμησης σε κατηγορία ασθένειας (E)   |                   |            |
| E01A               | Μεταμόσχευση ήπατος  | 28.907 €          | 26         |
| E03A               | Μεταμόσχευση καρδιάς-πνευμόνων   | 50.379 €          | 35         |
| E04A               | Μεταμοσχεύσεις Πνευμόνων   | 30.015 €          | 20         |
| E05A               | Μεταμόσχευση Καρδιάς   | 34.279 €          | 40         |
| E06M               | Τραχειοστομία με μηχανική υποστήριξη αναπνοής > 95 ώρες με καταστροφικές συνυπάρχουσες παθήσεις-επιπλοκές  | 39.863 €          | 47         |
| E06Χα              | Τραχειοστομία με μηχανική υποστήριξη αναπνοής > 95 ώρες χωρίς καταστροφικές συνυπάρχουσες παθήσεις-επιπλοκές ή τραχειοστομία/(ή)μηχανική υποστήριξη αναπνοής > 95 ώρες με καταστροφικές συνυπάρχουσες παθήσεις-επιπλοκές | 20.597 €          | 25         |

The referring physician, as a **second step**, has the possibility, by employing the software-tool, to add an ICD-10 code, describing his/her “major diagnostic suspicion” justifying this specific referral.

For example, a CT-referral can be accompanied with a comment and the corresponding ICD-10 code :

**“Έγχεφαλικό επεισόδιο, μη καθοριζόμενο αν οφείλεται σε αιμορραγία ή έμφρακτο”**

ICD-10 Code: I64 (Stroke, non specified if hemorrhagic or thrombotic). The CT-referral is, thus, fully justified and documented (cf. Table 8).

**Table 7.** Step 1: Assigning a GMPC-Code (K500881).

| A    | B       | C  |
|------|---------|--|
| 6632 | K500641 | ΑΚΤΙΝΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΚΡΟΤΑΦΟΓΝΑΘΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΘΡΩΣΗΣ ΜΕ ΑΝΟΙΚΤΟ ΚΑΙ ΚΛΕΙΣΤΟ ΣΤΟΜΑ   |
| 6633 | K500645 | ΑΝΕΝΕΡΓΟΣ  |
| 6634 | K500653 | ΜΑΓΝΗΤΙΚΗ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΚΡΟΤΑΦΟΓΝΑΘΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΘΡΩΣΗΣ ΜΕ ΑΝΟΙΚΤΟ ΣΤΟΜΑ ΧΩΡΙΣ ΠΑΡΑΜΑΓΝΗΤΙΚΗ ΟΥΣΙΑ                                   |
| 6635 | K500681 | ΑΚΤΙΝΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΠΛΑΓΙΑ ΚΕΦΑΛΟΜΕΤΡΙΚΗ  |
| 6636 | K500691 | ΟΡΘΟΠΑΝΤΟΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ  |
| 6637 | K500701 | ΑΚΤΙΝΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΤΡΑΧΗΛΟΥ ΚΑΤΑ ΜΕΤΩΠΟ  |
| 6638 | K500721 | ΑΚΤΙΝΟΣΚΟΠΙΚΟΣ ΕΛΕΓΧΟΣ ΦΑΡΥΓΓΑ - ΥΠΟΦΑΡΥΓΓΑ  |
| 6639 | K500723 | ΑΝΕΝΕΡΓΟΣ  |
| 6640 | K500727 | ΛΑΡΥΓΓΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ  |
| 6641 | K500741 | ΑΝΕΝΕΡΓΟΣ  |
| 6642 | K500761 | ΣΙΕΛΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ  |
| 6643 | K500881 | ΑΞΟΝΙΚΗ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΕΓΚΕΦΑΛΟΥ, ΧΩΡΙΣ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ ΥΛΙΚΟ  |
| 6644 | K500901 | ΑΞΟΝΙΚΗ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΕΓΚΕΦΑΛΟΥ, ΜΕ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ(Α) ΥΛΙΚΟ(Α)   |
| 6645 | K500921 | ΑΞΟΝΙΚΗ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΕΓΚΕΦΑΛΟΥ, ΧΩΡΙΣ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ ΥΛΙΚΟ, ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΕΙΤΑΙ ΑΠΟ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ(Α) ΥΛΙΚΟ(Α) ΚΑΙ ΕΠΙΠΛΕΟΝ ΤΟΜΕΣ         |
| 6646 | K500941 | ΑΞΟΝΙΚΗ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΟΦΘΑΛΜΙΚΩΝ ΚΟΓΧΩΝ ΧΩΡΙΣ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ ΥΛΙΚΟ   |
| 6647 | K500943 | ΑΞΟΝΙΚΗ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΟΦΘΑΛΜΙΚΩΝ ΚΟΓΧΩΝ ΜΕ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ(Α) ΥΛΙΚΟ(Α)  |
| 6648 | K500945 | ΑΞΟΝΙΚΗ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΟΦΘΑΛΜΙΚΩΝ ΚΟΓΧΩΝ ΧΩΡΙΣ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ ΥΛΙΚΟ, ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΕΙΤΑΙ ΑΠΟ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ(Α) ΥΛΙΚΟ(Α) ΚΑΙ ΕΠΙΠΛΕΟΝ ΤΟΜΕΣ  |
| 6649 | K500953 | ΑΞΟΝΙΚΗ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΣΠΛΑΧΝΙΚΟΥ ΚΡΑΝΙΟΥ ΧΩΡΙΣ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ ΥΛΙΚΟ  |
| 6650 | K500955 | ΑΞΟΝΙΚΗ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΣΠΛΑΧΝΙΚΟΥ ΚΡΑΝΙΟΥ ΜΕ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ ΥΛΙΚΟ   |
| 6651 | K500957 | ΑΞΟΝΙΚΗ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΣΠΛΑΧΝΙΚΟΥ ΚΡΑΝΙΟΥ ΧΩΡΙΣ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ ΥΛΙΚΟ, ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΕΙΤΑΙ ΑΠΟ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ(Α) ΥΛΙΚΟ(Α) ΚΑΙ ΕΠΙΠΛΕΟΝ ΤΟΜΕΣ |
| 6652 | K500961 | ΑΞΟΝΙΚΗ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΤΡΑΧΗΛΟΥ ΧΩΡΙΣ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ ΥΛΙΚΟ  |
| 6653 | K500963 | ΑΞΟΝΙΚΗ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΤΡΑΧΗΛΟΥ ΜΕ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ(Α) ΥΛΙΚΟ(Α)   |
| 6654 |         | ΑΞΟΝΙΚΗ ΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΤΡΑΧΗΛΟΥ ΧΩΡΙΣ ΣΚΙΑΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ ΥΛΙΚΟ ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΕΙΤΑΙ ΑΠΟ   |

**Table 8.** Step 2: Assigning an ICD-10 Code (I64).

| B         |  | C |
|-----------|--|---|
| ΚΩΔΙΚΟΣ   | ΤΕΛΙΚΗ ΟΝΟΜΑΣΙΑ  |   |
| 1737 I48  | I48 Κολπική μαρμαρυγή και πτερυγισμός  |   |
| 1738 I49  | I49 Άλλες καρδιακές αρρυθμίες  |   |
| 1739 I50  | I50 Καρδιακή ανεπάρκεια  |   |
| 1740 I51  | I51 Complications and ill-defined descriptions of heart disease                      |   |
| 1741 I52* | I52* Άλλες καρδιακές διαταραχές σε νοσήματα που ταξινομούνται αλλού                  |   |
| 1743 I60  | I60 Υπαραχνοειδής αιμορραγία   |   |
| 1744 I61  | I61 Ενδοεγκεφαλική αιμορραγία  |   |
| 1745 I62  | I62 Άλλη, μη τραυματικής αιτιολογίας, ενδοκράνια αιμορραγία                          |   |
| 1746 I63  | I63 Εγκεφαλικό έμφραγμα  |   |
| 1747 I64  | I64 Εγκεφαλικό επεισόδιο, μη καθοριζόμενο αν οφείλεται σε αιμορραγία ή έμφρακτο      |   |
| 1748 I65  | I65 Απόφραξη και στένωση των προεγκεφαλικών αρτηριών που δεν καταλήγει σε εγκεφαλικό |   |
| 1750 I66  | I66 Απόφραξη και στένωση των εγκεφαλικών αρτηριών που δεν καταλήγει σε εγκεφαλικό    |   |
| 1752 I67  | I67 Άλλα νοσήματα των αγγείων του εγκεφάλου  |   |
| 1753 I68* | I68* Διαταραχές των αγγείων του εγκεφάλου σε νοσήματα που ταξινομούνται αλλού        |   |
| 1754 I69  | I69 Επιπλώσεις της νόσου των αγγείων του εγκεφάλου                                   |   |
| 1756 I70  | I70 Αθηροσκληρώση  |   |
| 1757 I71  | I71 Διαχωριστικό ανεύρυσμα αορτής  |   |
| 1758 I72  | I72 Άλλα ανευρύσματα   |   |
| 1759 I73  | I73 Άλλα νοσήματα των περιφερικών αγγείων  |   |

If a patient is discharged from a Hospital (e.g. to another Hospital, to a Hospice or to Home-care) it is important, as a **third step**, to include the assigned KEN-Code on the discharge-document. This is a helpful short indication for the General Practitioner or other Physician, who has referred him initially and most probably will be in charge for ensuring the Continuity of Care of the discharged patient. This will be also useful for a future Medical Imaging referral. That is the case in our current example, since the referred and hospitalized patient, has been discharged to home-care, after treatment for an:

**“Παροδικό ισχαιμικό εγκεφαλικό επεισόδιο και απόφραξη προεγκεφαλικών αγγείων με καταστροφικές (συστηματικές) ή σοβαρές συνυπάρχουσες παθήσεις – επιπλοκές”.**

KEN-Code: N29M (Ischemic Stroke, with serious or catastrophic Comorbidities and Complications, cf. Table 9).

**Table 9.** Step 3: Assigning a KEN-Code if necessary (LOS: Length of stay in days).

|             |   |                |          |
|-------------|---|----------------|----------|
| N28M        | Σκλήρυνση κατά πλάκας και παρεγκεφαλιδική αταξία με συνυπάρχουσες παθήσεις - επιπλοκές  | 1.907 €        | 9        |
| N68X        | Σκλήρυνση κατά πλάκας και παρεγκεφαλιδική αταξία χωρίς συνυπάρχουσες παθήσεις - επιπλοκές   | 565 €          | 2        |
| <b>N29M</b> | <b>Παροδικό εγκεφαλικό ισχαιμικό επεισόδιο και προεγκεφαλιδική απόφραξη με καταστροφικές ή σοβαρές συνυπάρχουσες παθήσεις – επιπλοκές</b> | <b>1.230 €</b> | <b>6</b> |
| N29X        | Παροδικό ισχαιμικό επεισόδιο και προεγκεφαλιδική απόφραξη χωρίς καταστροφικές ή σοβαρές συνυπάρχουσες παθήσεις – επιπλοκές                | 545 €          | 3        |
| N30A        | Αγγειακό εγκεφαλικό επεισόδιο και άλλες αγγειακές εγκεφαλικές δυσλειτουργίες, ασθενούς που κατέληξε ή διακοσμήθηκε σε <5ημέρες            | 420 €          | 2        |
| N30Ma       | Αγγειακό εγκεφαλικό επεισόδιο και άλλες αγγειακές εγκεφαλικές δυσλειτουργίες με καταστροφικές συνυπάρχουσες παθήσεις - επιπλοκές          | 3.408 €        | 17       |
| N30Mβ       | Αγγειακό εγκεφαλικό επεισόδιο και άλλες αγγειακές εγκεφαλικές δυσλειτουργίες με σοβαρές συνυπάρχουσες παθήσεις - επιπλοκές                | 1.860 €        | 9        |

## Conclusion

We have formed so far, a SSK-Recommendation assisted Medical Imaging referral tool, by employing the currently three Classifications and Codifications, i.e. first, the Greek Medical Procedures Codification Part 3: “Imaging – Diagnostic and Therapeutic Radiological Procedures” (Codes 6609-7468), second, the Greek translation of the WHO ICD-10, and finally the Greek DRGs-alike KEN Classification, adopted by the Greek NHS (ESY), the following 3-D Code-Vector (CV):

$$CV = (GMPC\_K500881, ICD-10\_I64, KEN\_N29M)$$

This vector constitutes the kernel for both, a Medical Imaging linked Continuity of Care Record (CCR) and a semantically annotated Medical Imaging referral Web-service that will constitute the next R&D step.

The developed tool supports referral decisions concerning first, referral decision-making support based on collectively and thoroughly peer-reviewed Recommendations, second appropriate selection of the imaging-technique ranking and sequencing, with regard to diagnostic efficiency, combined with patient-safety and finally acquaintance of medical personnel with the inevitable, in contemporary medical practice, employment of established codifications and classifications of diagnostic procedures and the associated costs for the Greek National Health System.

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