

REFERENCE LEVELS FOR IMAGE QUALITY IN MAMMOGRAPHY

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Diagnostic reference levels are well established tool for optimization in diagnostic radiology. A dose reference level for certain diagnostic procedure is usually set at the third quartile of distribution of doses in different diagnostic centres. It is meant to identify practices with unusually high doses. If image quality is somehow quantified, the same "worst quarter" principle can also be used to identify practices with less than optimal performance in terms of image quality.

In Slovenia performance of mammographic centres is evaluated annually. Technical testing includes mean glandular dose (MGD) determination and evaluation of technical image quality using an image of mammographic phantom. From phantom image simple image quality parameters are derived and for some of them reference levels can be established. In the presentation results from ten years testing (1996-2000) of mammography centres are presented and the usefulness of reference levels evaluated.

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