Medical Imaging

Hospital Quality Measures	What Is This? Why Is It Important?
Outpatients with low-back pain who had an MRI without trying recommended treatments first (such as physical therapy)	● An **MRI** ***(Magnetic Resonance Imaging)*** is a test that uses a powerful magnetic field, with no radiation risk, and a computer to produce detailed pictures of the inside of the body *(such as the bones, organs, and other body parts)* . ● Standards of care say that most patients with low-back pain should start with treatment, like physical therapy or chiropractic care, and have an **MRI** only if the treatment does not help. ● ***Lower Percentages are Better.***
Outpatient CT scans of the abdomen that were "combination" (double) scans	● A **CT scan** (*also known as a CAT scan*) uses multiple X-rays to produce detailed pictures of the inside of the body (*such as the bones, organs, and other body parts*) ● "Combination" **CT scan** means that the patient gets 2 **CT scans**: one scan without contrast, followed by a second scan with contrast. Contrast is a substance consumed by the patient prior to the scan for body parts to stand out more clearly. ● Standards of quality care say that most patients who are getting a **CT scan** of the chest or abdomen should be given a single **CT scan** (*either one with contrast or one without contrast*), rather than a "combination" **CT scan**. ● ***Lower Percentages are Better.***
Outpatient CT scans of the chest that were "combination" (double) scans	
Outpatients who got cardiac imaging stress tests before low-risk outpatient surgery	● A cardiac stress test measures the heart's ability to respond when it is working hard, and can be useful in evaluating a patient's surgical risk. ● This includes the percentage of all cardiac stress tests done in a hospital outpatient imaging department for Medicare patients (*using echocardiograms, CT scans, and MRIs*) who were having certain low-risk outpatient surgical procedures. ● ***Lower Percentages are Better.***
Outpatients with brain CT scans who got a sinus CT scan at the same time	● Brain and sinus **CT scans** can be important tools for diagnosing problems that may be causing severe headaches or chronic sinus infections; however, they also expose patients to high levels of radiation. ● It is recommended that only patients with head injuries or tumors get both a brain and sinus **CT scan** at the same time. ● ***Lower Percentages are Better.***
Outpatients who had a follow-up mammogram, breast ultrasound, or breast MRI within the 45 days after a screening mammogram	● A screening mammogram is an X-ray of the breast to check for possible breast cancer before it can be detected by patients or health care professionals. ● There are many reasons for differences in follow-up rates, including poor technique (*blurry X-rays that need to be repeated*), medical history of the patient undergoing screening, a lack of skill or experience in interpreting the screening mammograms, and whether he/she is being screened for the first time or has previously had a mammography screening. ● ***Hospitals that are rated well on this measure have a percentage of about 9%. Scores above 14% may mean a facility is doing unnecessary follow-up, while percentages near 0% may mean a hospital is missing cancer signs.***