ASUM

Standards of Practice

Promoting ultrasound excellence



Guidelines, Policies and Statements

Statement on the Use of Ultrasound by Medical Practitioners

Adopted by Council September 2008

Revised September 2010, August 2014

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Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine

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1. Introduction

In Australia and New Zealand, diagnostic ultrasound has historically been provided through radiology services with scans being performed by sonographers and medical practitioners and reported by sonologists with radiology or DDU equivalent qualifications.

The increasing portability and affordability of ultrasound has seen an increasing demand from several clinical specialties which have recognised an increasing utility for the use of diagnostic ultrasound in the clinical environment in the treatment of their patients. Medical specialists other than radiologists and sonologists are increasingly wishing to undertake ultrasound examinations on patients, as a direct extension of the clinical examination.

There is a demand by a number of the Australian and New Zealand medical colleges to incorporate ultrasound experience into clinical training and accreditation where appropriate. The Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM) supports the devolution of diagnostic ultrasound to the clinical specialties only where the necessary regulatory environment and infrastructure exist for the supervision of training in the medical and surgical specialties.

Training of clinicians in medical ultrasound should be adequately founded and planned with a defined curriculum, standards and scope of practice that appropriately reflects the role of clinical diagnostic ultrasound within a defined specialty with access to nationally recognised qualifications that are recognised for credentialing purposes. ASUM has the necessary infrastructure and experience to provide guidelines for the training of the medical and surgical specialties in consultation with the medical colleges and societies.

This is an evolving statement that sets out the credentialing requirements for medical practitioners who use ultrasound.

2. Principles

2.1. The medical use and interpretation of ultrasound is highly operator-dependent, requiring both training and experience.

2.2. All medical practitioners who provide an ultrasound service should be adequately trained with access to appropriate qualification and credentialing pathways. ASUM provides the necessary qualifying and credentialing pathways for clinicians wishing to use ultrasound in their clinical practice through the Diploma in Diagnostic Ultrasound (DDU) and Certificate in Clinician Performed Ultrasound (CCPU).

2.3. ASUM, in consultation with the Australian and New Zealand medical colleges, provides definitions of the appropriate level of training and the scope of practice appropriate to meet the requirements of the various medical and surgical specialties.

2.4. All medical practitioners who provide an ultrasound service should be specifically trained and hold an appropriate credential.

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3. Specialist Diagnostic Ultrasound - Referred Ultrasound Services

3.1. The Diploma in Diagnostic Ultrasound (DDU) is provided by ASUM as an appropriate qualification for sonologists, who accept referrals from other medical practitioners.

3.2. The training required to attain these levels is defined in the syllabus of the DDU.

3.3. Entry requirements for the DDU are described in the DDU regulations.

3.4. Sonologists who have been awarded the DDU or an equivalent qualification will display the following abilities within their specialist discipline:

- accept tertiary referrals
- perform specialised ultrasound examinations
- perform advanced ultrasound-guided invasive procedures
- conduct substantial research in ultrasound
- teach ultrasound at all levels
- be aware of and to pursue developments in ultrasound

3.5. Sonologists holding the DDU are considered to hold a qualification equivalent to the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists (RANZCR) for the purposes of funding under the DIST.

4. Point of Care Ultrasound (PoCUS)

4.1. The Certificate in Clinician Performed Ultrasound (CCPU) is provided by ASUM as an appropriate qualification for medical practitioners who practice Point of Care Ultrasound (PoCUS) to assist the diagnosis and treatment of their own patients.

4.2. The CCPU provides credentialing for medical practitioners who have met the minimum training requirements for the use of diagnostic ultrasound, as a direct extension of their clinical examination in the course of their normal clinical practice.

4.2.1. The training required to attain the CCPU is defined in the syllabus of the CCPU.

4.2.2. Entry requirements for the CCPU are described in the CCPU Regulations.

4.3. Clinicians who have been awarded the CCPU will display the following abilities:

- practice in accordance with the polices and statements of ASUM
- use ultrasound within their normal clinical practice, only performing those scans for which they have been trained and credentialed
- perform scans defined in the CCPU curriculum safely and accurately
- perform those common non-complex ultrasound-guided invasive procedures defined in the CCPU curriculum safely and accurately
- recognise and differentiate normal anatomy and pathology as they relate to the range of studies defined in the CCPU curriculum

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- diagnose common abnormalities as defined in the CCPU curriculum
- conduct research in ultrasound

5. Maintaining Competence

5.1. It is necessary for each practitioner to maintain competence through study and practice.

5.2. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) should be undertaken that incorporates elements of ultrasound practice.

5.3. Regular audit of the individual's ultrasound practice should be undertaken to demonstrate that the indications, performance and diagnostic quality of the service are all satisfactory.

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