



# MBMS

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# Radiology Trends

## Did You Know?

The U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) has begun its first round of investments totaling \$46 million for the 2014 fiscal year to support Brain Research Through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) initiative. It was launched to give researchers better insight into brain disorders.

## Federal Judge Rules Against Obamacare Subsidies

In a legal setback for the Obama administration, a federal judge in Oklahoma recently ruled that people in states that rely on the federal insurance exchange are not eligible for Obamacare premium subsidies to help them pay for coverage. U.S. District Judge Ronald White, a George W. Bush appointee, invalidated an Internal Revenue Service rule interpreting the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to allow the premium tax credits in states that have not established their own exchange. "The court holds that the IRS rule is arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion or otherwise not in accordance with law," White wrote. In his ruling, White rejected the administration's argument that striking down the subsidies would cripple the entire healthcare reform law. "Congress is free to amend the ACA to provide for tax credits in both state and federal exchanges, if that is the legislative will," he wrote. The Oklahoma court is the first U.S. District Court to rule that the language of the Affordable Care Act does not allow subsidies in states that have not established their own marketplaces. Experts say the issue may go up to the U.S. Supreme Court, and the outcome will be critical to the fate of the healthcare reform law. Without the subsidies in the 36 states that use the federal exchange, millions of people likely would lose their coverage and the law's insurance reforms would unravel.

## Did You Know?

Three years after the CMS carefully selected 32 accountable care organizations deemed best to manage the Pioneer program's financial risks, three more have decided they no longer want to participate. These new departures—leaving the program with only 19 ACO's—suggest even the most sophisticated health systems may be unwilling to take losses.

## MRI Protocol Links Gray-Matter Changes to MS Severity

Using a homegrown MRI protocol, researchers found that a loss of myelin in the gray matter of multiple sclerosis (MS) patients' brains was a strong indicator of disease severity, according to a recent study published online in *Radiology*. While myelin loss in white and gray matter in MS patients has been seen in postmortem pathological studies, this research for the first time establishes its clinical significance in gray matter, thanks to macromolecular proton fraction (MPF) mapping.

"We found with this study that MPF in gray matter is significantly stronger and correlated with the [patient's] clinical status. In other words, it seems a much better predictor of disability in MS patients," lead author Vasily Yarnykh, PhD, an associate professor in the University of Washington's department of radiology, told *AuntMinnie.com*. "From the first

analysis, it was quite surprising because MS is typically considered a white-matter disease."

MPF mapping provides information on the content of biological macromolecules, which are large molecules, such as proteins, lipids, and carbohydrates, found in tissues. The imaging technique has been slow to develop because it takes so long to acquire data.

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### Twelve Months and Counting Until ICD-10

This time next year the long awaited conversion to ICD-10-CM will be upon us. MBMS has been working diligently for several years now to ensure all aspects of our organization are fully compliant and ready for the go-live on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. Personally, I have written several articles, taught numerous seminars and webinars, conducted onsite review courses, etc. One of the most critical elements from an educational standpoint is the development of detailed "ICD-10 Decision Trees". MBMS has created these detailed decision trees based off of our client's most highly reported diagnosis codes over the last three years. What have you done to get you and your practice ready? If you had to think long and hard, may I suggest that you begin preparing immediately. A valuable starting point may be to review and possibly edit existing templates by using some internal research or by requesting some of MBMS' Decision Trees. In addition, we will also be hosting webinars to familiarize you and your practice with the biggest change to diagnosis reporting in over 30 years. The

hope is that your hospital/facility will also be offering educational options to scheduling staff, technicians, and other pertinent personnel to ensure everyone is prepared. My take: Specificity is the name of the game; not only in the body of the report but also in the medical history. As always, if you have any questions, or would like to receive some of our ICD-10 Decision Trees, please feel free to email me at: [lshore@mbms.net](mailto:lshore@mbms.net).

## Elastography May Avoid Needless Biopsies of Thyroid Nodules

Thanks to its high negative predictive value, ultrasound elastography with intrinsic compression may be able to reduce by one-third the number of unnecessary biopsies performed on calcified thyroid nodules, according to research published in the October issue of *Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology*.

In a study involving 65 calcified thyroid nodules, a team of researchers led by Dr. Min-Hee Kim of Catholic University in Korea found that elastography yielded 95.8% negative predictive value in detecting malignancy. Furthermore, more than one-third of biopsies on calcified nodules could have been avoided based on elastography results.

"Intrinsic compression elastography can be used in conjunction with B-mode [ultrasound] to reduce the number of [fine-needle aspiration] biopsies of calcified thyroid nodules," wrote Kim and colleagues, who also came from the University of Washington and Pohang University of Science and Technology.

## Coding and Compliance Tips by Lori Shore, CPC, RCC