

Impact of COVID-19 'Safer at Home' order on radiology utilization

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A Scientific E-Poster to be presented at the 2021 ARRS Virtual Annual Meeting found the COVID-19 "Safer at Home" order resulted in a significant decline in radiology ordering utilization, outpatient consultations, and emergency department (ED) visits.

"There was a disproportionate impact in the outpatient setting, especially on screening and other nonessential imaging," wrote Evan Raff of Olive View-UCLA Medical Center, which "mirrors the impact that the order has had on clinical services, as reflected in outpatient consult volumes, with larger declines in specialties with high screening rates, including in gastroenterology, optometry/ophthalmology, and gynecology."

Raff's review of radiology orders, indications, and appropriateness for studies in Los Angeles County's Department of Health Services system determined total [radiology](#) orders declined by an average of 40% following the "Safer At Home" order. Moreover, outpatient volumes declined by 67%, ED volumes declined by 21%, and inpatient volumes declined by 13%.

The biggest impacts on subspecialty imaging were seen in dexta and breast imaging, which saw [volume](#) decreases of 88% and 80%, respectively, whereas the least impacted areas were body CT and [interventional radiology](#), which only saw a 29% and 26% decline, respectively.

ED visits, typically considered urgent and essential, declined by an average of 44%, indicating that the "Safer at Home" order "was also reducing utilization of some essential services or that these visits/orders may not have been truly urgent," the author of this ARRS Annual Meeting E-Poster concluded.

More information: www.arrs.org/AM21

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