

Virtual Colonoscopy: CT and MR Colonoscopy - How Good is it?

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Summary

Since its introduction in 1994 Virtual Colonoscopy (CT/MR Colonography) has continued to improve considerably. This is as a result of vastly superior and faster multidetector computed tomography scanners and quicker MR scanners. Improvements in software and hardware of computers allow the dynamic and interactive real time viewing of the colon in 2 and 3 dimensional images.

Virtual colonoscopy is currently under investigation as a potential screening test for colonic polyps and cancer.

Many studies have been carried out to assess the ability of CT and MR colonography to detect polyps. The results of these studies have varied from 48% of small polyps (<6mm diameter) to 90% or more of all polyps especially with newer multidetector CT scanners and the use of 3D imaging. There is already a role for virtual colonography in patients with failed colonoscopy.

The future of virtual colonoscopy is very promising. For this procedure to be better accepted it is important for the radiologist who interprets the examination to be better trained in performing virtual colonoscopy especially the interpretation.
