

Radiation Dose and Image Quality of Bladder Cancer Patients Analysis on Abdominal CT-Scan Examinations

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ABSTRACT

The bladder is a subperitoneal, hollow muscular organ that acts as a reservoir for urine and located in the lower abdomen. Bladder cancer is one of health issues that can affect many people each year. Bladder cancer ranks as the 10th most common cancer worldwide. Early management includes cancer screening using abdominal CT-Scan. The objective of this study was to analyze the radiation dose received by patients and the image quality of patients underwent abdominal CT scans based on the Signal to Noise Ratio (SNR) and Contrast to Noise Ratio (CNR) values obtained. Data analysis management, specifically using quantitative analysis techniques, involved observing 20 bladder cancer patients with a total of 2,653 images. The IndoseCT software was used for analyzing the radiation dose to patients, while the IndoQCT software was used for analyzing image quality in CT-Abdomen examinations based on Signal to Noise Ratio (SNR) and Contrast to Noise Ratio (CNR) values. The results showed that the radiation dose received by patients during CT-Abdomen examinations was higher than the dose output by the device. The maximum dose output by the device (CTDIvol) was 50.10 mGy, and the minimum was 6.70 mGy, while the maximum dose received by patients (SSDE) was 53.34 mGy, and the minimum was 9.34 mGy. The image quality results for CT-Abdomen examinations based on SNR and CNR values indicated that the image quality obtained was adequate for diagnostic purposes.

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INTRODUCTION

Bladder cancer ranks as the 10th most common cancer worldwide. According to GLOBOCAN 2020 data, there were 573,000 new cases and 213,000 deaths attributed to this type of cancer. The majority of bladder cancers are urothelial carcinomas, with less common types including squamous cell carcinoma, adenocarcinoma, small cell carcinoma, and sarcoma. Based on the staging classification from the World Health Organization (WHO), bladder cancer is classified into non-muscle-invasive bladder cancer (NMIBC) and muscle-invasive bladder cancer (MIBC). The treatment for NMIBC typically involves transurethral resection of the bladder tumor (TURBT) and chemotherapy to prevent recurrence, using agents such as Mitomycin-C and Epirubicin [1].

CT-Abdomen examination is one of the commonly used diagnostic methods to evaluate the

condition of organs within the abdominal cavity. Over time, CT-Scan has become a diagnostic tool that provides highly accurate information. However, attention must also be given to radiation protection for patients as well as the significant costs involved in this examination. Awareness of the potential increase in radiation dose during CT-Scan examinations has led to efforts to reduce radiation exposure. However, reducing the CT-Scan dose can result in decreased image quality with increased noise levels. In other words, a high radiation dose is required to achieve good image quality [2].

In the CT-Scan process, to create an image of the object, radiation beams from the source pass through the object's plane from various angles. The radiation that successfully penetrates the object is then detected by the detector, recorded, and collected as input data. This data are subsequently processed by a computer using a method called reconstruction to generate the image of the object [3].

Diagnostic Reference Levels (DRLs) are typically determined by collecting patient dose data at

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53 the 75th percentile of the dose distribution or the 110 examination of the conditions, as well as optimization
54 median CTDI_{vol} and DLP obtained from surveys 111 of patient dose and image quality [11].
55 across a wide user base. Since 25 % of the population 112 Optimal image quality is indicated by a high
56 will exceed the DRLs, these should be viewed as 113 signal-to-noise ratio (SNR). SNR is the ratio of signal
57 indicators rather than signs of excessive radiation 114 strength to noise strength; the less noise in the image,
58 exposure. DRLs can be established at the local, 115 the higher the resulting SNR [12]. Low contrast
59 hospital, or center level [4]. 116 resolution differentiates the density of an object from
60 To accurately estimate the dose in CT-Scan 117 its background. The Contrast to Noise Ratio (CNR)
61 patients, reference can be made to an optimization 118 parameter measures how well the signal intensity can
62 index known as the DRLs. Currently, the DRLs for 119 be distinguished from the background [13].
63 CT-Scans is expressed in terms of CTDI_{vol} 120 Image processing in CT-Scan aims to enhance image
64 (Computed Tomography Dose Index Volume) 121 quality by reducing noise, increasing spatial
65 and DLP (Dose Length Product), where CTDI_{vol} 122 resolution, and improving contrast resolution [14].
66 represents the dose output indicator from the CT-Scan 123 Image noise is an important factor in evaluating
67 for a single slice, and DLP represents the total dose 124 image quality and determining system performance.
68 during the examination. The values of CTDI_{vol} and 125 Noise in CT refers to the level of uncertainty in
69 DLP are displayed on the CT-Scan workstation [5]. 126 measuring the attenuation of X-rays passing through
70 The DRLs is generally designed for patients with 127 the patient. CT noise depends on the number of X-ray
71 standard body dimensions. The systematic dosing in 128 photons reaching the detector, known as quantum
72 CT-Scans using automatic registration has been 129 noise, which is the most significant factor affecting
73 regulated by considering parameters such as the 130 image quality [15].
74 lateral head thickness and Water Equivalent Diameter 131 Research by Missinychrista et al. [16]
75 (Dw) [6]. 132 compared the dose emitted by CT-Scans with the dose
76 CTDI_{vol} does not specifically reflect the dose 133 received by patients, finding that the dose emitted by
77 for each patient because it is only measured on 134 the machine tends to be lower than the dose received
78 phantoms with diameters of 16 cm and 32 cm. 135 by patients. In addition, the research reported in
79 Therefore, the American Association of Physicists 136 Diartama et al. [17] to determine the DRL values for
80 in Medicine (AAPM) introduced a dose parameter that 137 adult non-contrast MSCT Thorax at X General
81 accounts for patient dimensions, known as the Size- 138 Hospital in Denpasar and compare them with the
82 Specific Dose Estimate (SSDE) [7]. SSDE is the 139 standards recommended by BAPETEN/IDRL 2021.
83 product of the conversion factor (f) and the CTDI_{vol} 140 The results showed that the third quartile value (75th
84 value. It represents the dose value that accounts for the 141 percentile) of CTDI_{vol} and DLP received by patients
85 patient's body size (mGy), with f being the conversion 142 was 5.77 mGy for CTDI_{vol} and 232.73 mGy.cm for
86 factor [8]. 143 DLP. These values are still below the standards
87 Research on calculating DRL values using the 144 recommended by BAPETEN/IDRL 2021, indicating
88 SSDE method is considered to better represent the 145 that the amount of radiation used is within normal
89 dose received by patients. In addition to manual 146 limits and considered safe.
90 calculations, SSDE values can now be automatically 147 Research by Irsal and Winarno [18] analyzed
91 computed using software such as IndoseCT. IndoseCT 148 image quality and radiation dose in pediatric
92 is software developed to calculate radiation dose 149 head CT-Scans, with a linear regression test
93 values for patients undergoing CT-Scan examinations 150 showing an R² = 0.045 between mAs and CNR,
94 by [9]. This software functions to calculate and record 151 and an R² = 0.704 between mAs and CTDI. Based on
95 the radiation dose for patients undergoing CT 152 the estimated radiation dose limits, the examination
96 examinations. IndoseCT not only calculates the 153 was deemed safe for use. However, the use of mAs
97 radiation dose from the CT device using CTDI_{vol}, but 154 values should be carefully considered as part of an
98 also considers the individual dose received by each 155 optimization effort to reduce radiation dose while still
99 patient using the SSDE method [10]. 156 providing optimal image quality.
100 CT-Scan uses X-rays to produce images with 157 Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the
101 adequate diagnostic detail. Tissue reactions (such as 158 radiation dose received by bladder cancer patients and
102 infertility, cataracts, erythema, hair loss, etc.) and 159 to evaluate the image quality of bladder cancer
103 stochastic consequences (such as cancer and genetic 160 patients during CT-Abdomen examinations based on
104 impacts) are associated with high-dose ionizing 161 the SNR and CNR values obtained. This research
105 radiation exposure. As a result of patients' exposure to 162 provided a better understanding of the radiation dose
106 higher CT doses, there is an increased likelihood 163 risks faced by patients during CT-Abdomen
107 of developing cancer. After the examination, 164 examinations while ensuring that the image quality
108 this becomes one of the greatest sources of anxiety for 165 is sufficiently high for diagnosis, adhering to the
109 patients. Consequently, its clinical use requires careful 166 principle of As Low as Diagnostically Acceptable

167being Indication-oriented and Patient-specific 224scan length (L). Mathematically, DLP is expressed
 168(ALADAIP). Consequently, this study is expected to 225as follows Eq. (3).
 169make a positive contribution to the development of 226
 170safety and effectiveness in CT-Abdomen 227
 171examinations. 228

$$DLP = CTDI_{vol} \times L \tag{3}$$

172
 173
 174**METHODOLOGY** 229
 230(f) and the CTDI_{vol} value. Mathematically, SSDE is
 231expressed as follows Eq. (4).
 232

$$SSDE = f_{size}^{32x} \cdot CTDI_{vol}^{32} \tag{4}$$

175 This study was designed to analyze the 233
 176radiation dose and image quality of 20 bladder cancer 234
 177patients during CT-Abdomen examinations. 235where SSDE represents the dose value that
 178The research data included image data from patients 236accounts for the patient's body size (measured in
 179aged 40 and above, both male and female, and the 237mGy), and *f* is the conversion factor. For the f_{size}^{32x} ,
 180patients' images used are from diagnostic examinations 238this conversion factor is based on the diameter
 181using CT-Scan equipment. Data collection for 239of 32 cm PMMA phantom for a specific CTDI_{vol}
 182this study was conducted by downloading 240value with a given *D_w*, calculated using the
 183CT-Abdomen examination images from the official 241following Eq. (5).
 184website of the "National Cancer Institute (NCI)" at 242
 185<https://www.cancerimagingarchive.net/collection/tcg> 243
 186a-blca/ [19]. 244

$$f_{size}^{32x} = 4,3781 x e^{-0,0433 D_w} \tag{5}$$

187 The first step involved downloading the 245
 188imaging data from the website and calculating the 246the RoI and averaging the Hounsfield Unit (HU)
 189radiation dose values, including CTDI_{vol}, DLP, *D_w*, 247within the RoI. The area of the RoI is recorded,
 190and SSDE, using the IndoseCT software. the software 248and the *D_w* value is calculated using the
 191is equipped with features that allow for calculation of 249following Eq. (6).
 192CTDI_{vol}, DLP, *D_w*, and SSDE values. The second 250

$$D_w = \sqrt{\left(1 + \frac{HU_{ROI}}{1000}\right) \frac{Area_{ROI}}{\pi}} \tag{6}$$

193step is classified the data based on parameters, such 251
 194as CTDI_{vol}, DLP, *D_w*, and SSDE values. Each 252
 195variable was described by providing the mean and the 253
 19675th percentile values (or the 3rd quartile). To assess 254
 197image quality, SNR and CNR were measured for one 255
 198image from each patient. The Region of Interest (RoI) 256
 199was determined in both the signal area and the 257
 200background area to calculate the average signal and
 201compute the SNR and CNR values, using the
 202IndoQCT software.

Table 1. DRL threshold values for CT-Abdomen examinations [21].

Category	CTDI _{vol} (mGy)	DLP (mGy.cm)
Contrast Abdominal CT	20	1.360
Non-Contrast Abdominal CT	17	885

203 The establishment of the DRL for specific 258
 204examination data is set at the third quartile (Q3) 259
 205in the data distribution. The Q3 can be calculated 260
 206using Eq. (1). 261

$$n_{q3} = \frac{3(n+1)}{4} \tag{1}$$

207
 208
 209
 210where *n_{q3}* is the position of the third quartile and
 211*n* is the total number of data points [20].

212 The CTDI_{vol} value is calculated using the
 213following Eq. (2).
 214

$$CTDI_{vol} = \frac{CTDI_w}{pitch} \tag{2}$$

215
 216
 217where pitch characterizes the speed of the table feed
 218per 360° rotation and CTDI_w represents the CTDI
 219that accounts for the difference in dose values
 220between the surface and the center of the phantom
 221(measured in mGy).
 222
 223

222 DLP is the total absorbed dose from the entire
 223scan series, calculated from the CTDI_{vol} and the

Table 2. The conversion factors based on 32 cm AAPM phantom [22].

<i>D_w</i> (cm)	<i>f</i>
24	1,53
25	1,48
26	1,43
27	1,37
28	1,32
29	1,28
30	1,23
31	1,19
32	1,14
33	1,10
34	1,06
35	1,02
36	0,99
37	0,95
38	0,92
39	0,88
40	0,85
41	0,82

262 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

263 The data analyzed in this study consists
 264 of imaging data from 20 bladder cancer patients
 265 who underwent CT-Abdomen examinations.
 266 These images were downloaded from the official
 267 website of the "National Cancer Institute (NCI)" at
 268 <https://www.cancerimagingarchive.net/collection/tcg>
 269 <https://www.cancerimagingarchive.net/collection/tcga-blca/>,
 270 with the downloaded images in DICOM
 271 format. Table 3 presents the results of the DRL and
 272 SSDE examination for bladder cancer patients.
 273 The average values for DRLs and SSDE
 274 were calculated by averaging the CTDI_{vol},
 275 DRLs, and SSDE values. To find the third
 276 quartile for DRLs and SSDE, the parameters
 277 CTDI_{vol}, DLP, and SSDE were sorted. The third
 278 quartile values were then determined using Eq. (1).
 279 The mean and third quartile (75th percentile) values
 280 for DRLs and SSDE in bladder cancer patients are
 281 presented in Table 4.

Table 3. Results of DRLs and SSDE examination for bladder cancer patients.

Patient	CTDI _{vol} (mGy)	DLP (mGy.cm)	D _w (cm)	SSDE (mGy)
1	18.20	600.60	24.40	27.85
2	9.22	384.61	26.03	13.19
3	6.70	584.70	26.15	9.58
4	12.00	190.81	26.69	17.16
5	8.16	420.00	26.85	11.66
6	18.46	941.65	26.86	26.40
7	11.63	554.59	27.69	15.93
8	27.60	1,255.80	28.01	36.43
9	14.00	770.24	28.35	18.49
10	21.30	575.10	28.92	28.12
11	21.10	569.70	29.32	27.01
12	16.07	226.60	29.50	20.57
13	10.30	358.44	29.66	13.18
14	14.34	675.37	30.71	17.64
15	13.49	573.41	30.73	16.60
16	50.10	1,818.63	33.86	55.11
17	25.06	701.54	33.99	27.56
18	33.90	1,088.19	34.22	35.93
19	40.40	234.33	36.00	40.00
20	24.70	1,469.65	40.21	21.00

282 CTDI_{vol} = Computed Tomography Dose Index Volume (mGy)
 283 DLP = Dose Length Product (mGy.cm)
 284 D_w = Water Equivalent Diameter (cm)
 285 SSDE = Size-Specific Dose Estimate (mGy)

Table 4. Average and 75th percentile values of DRL and SSDE for bladder cancer patients.

D _w (cm)	Patient	Mean			75 th Percentile		
		CTDI _{vol} (mGy)	DLP (mGy.cm)	SSDE (mGy)	CTDI _{vol} (mGy)	DLP (mGy.cm)	SSDE (mGy)
24-41	20	19.84	699.70	23.97	25.06	941.65	28.12

287 D_w = Water Equivalent Diameter (cm)
 288 CTDI_{vol} = Computed Tomography Dose Index Volume (mGy)
 289 DLP = Dose Length Product (mGy.cm)
 290 SSDE = Size-Specific Dose Estimate (mGy)

291 Figure 1 shows the CTDI_{vol} graph for
 292 20 bladder cancer patients. From the collected
 293 images, the maximum CTDI_{vol} value obtained
 294 was 50.10 mGy, while the minimum CTDI_{vol} value
 295 was 6.70 mGy. Figure 2 displays the SSDE graph
 296 for 20 bladder cancer patients. The maximum
 297 SSDE value obtained was 55.11 mGy, while the
 298 minimum SSDE value was 9.58 mGy. In this case,
 299 the SSDE values for CT-Abdomen examinations
 300 were compared with the CTDI_{vol} values, which
 301 represent the radiation dose for each patient's
 302 examination.

303 The doses for 20 patients undergoing
 304 CT-Abdomen examinations exceed the DRLs limits
 305 set by BAPETEN, as shown by the average and 75th
 306 percentile values in Table 4. This indicates that the
 307 radiation doses surpass the recommended threshold,
 308 raising concerns about excessive radiation exposure.
 309 It is not only increases the risk of radiation-related
 310 side effects for patients, but also suggests a need for
 311 reevaluation of the CT protocols and procedures
 312 used. However, it also depends on the patients' body
 313 size and the physician's goal to achieve an accurate
 314 diagnosis. One study that found DRL values
 315 exceeding the established limits was conducted by
 316 Ginting et al. [23], which reported that DRLs values
 317 for abdominal contrast examinations at RSUD Bali
 318 Mandara exceeded BAPETEN's limits. It was
 319 influenced by the CT-Scan process, which was
 320 performed three times-on the arteries, veins, and delay.
 321 Additionally, high current levels also affect the
 322 DRLs and CTDI_{vol} values, although obese patients
 323 may require higher exposure factors. Therefore,
 324 CT-Scan examinations at RSUD Bali Mandara
 325 require a review of the Standard Operating
 326 Procedures (SOP) and exposure factors used.
 327 Contrast-enhanced abdominal examinations
 328 should focus more on the specific areas that need to
 329 be scanned to avoid exceeding BAPETEN's
 330 established limits.

331 Based on the mean and 75th percentile values
 332 obtained, it can be seen that the dose received by
 333 patients is higher than the dose emitted by the
 334 equipment. This discrepancy is due to the SSDE
 335 values, which depend on the patients' diameter
 336 affecting the conversion factors and the emitted
 337 dose. The conversion factor accounts for the
 338 patients' body size to provide a more accurate dose
 339 estimate, so although the equipment's dose output is
 340 certain, the actual dose received by the patient can
 341 be higher or lower depending on the patient's body
 342 diameter. This aligns with the study by Putri et al.
 343 [24], which found that the dose received by patients
 344 was greater than the dose emitted by the equipment
 345 due to the SSDE values depending on conversion
 346 factors influenced by the patient's body diameter and
 347 the emitted dose.

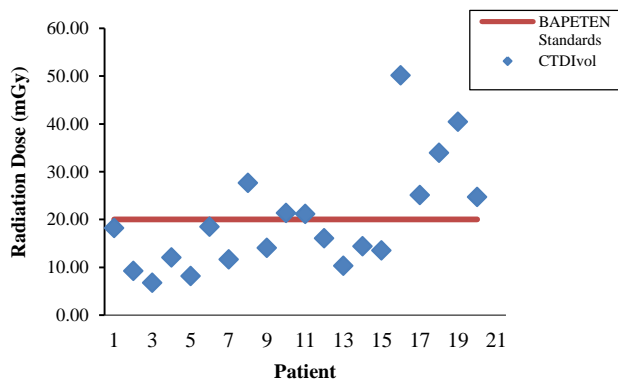


Fig. 1. CTDIvol graph for bladder cancer patients.

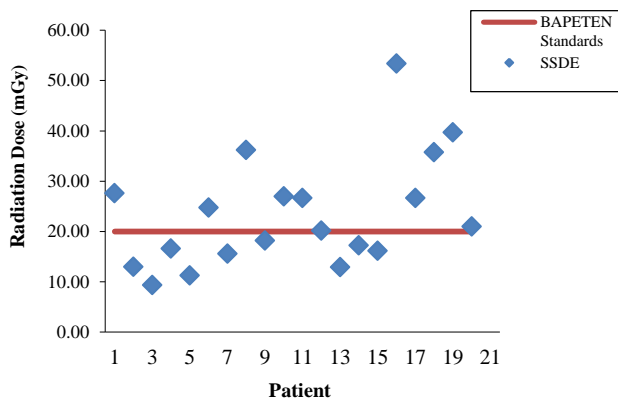


Fig. 2. SSDE graph for bladder cancer patients.

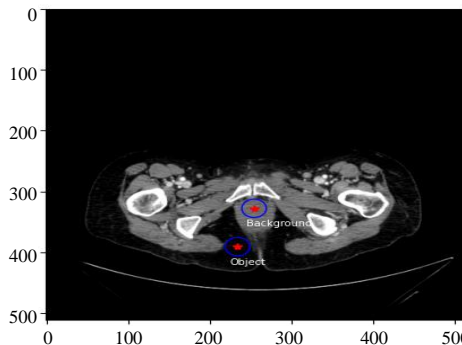


Fig. 3. The determination of region of interest (ROI) for signal and background on patient 1.

Table 5. Image quality based on SNR and CNR values.

Patient	SNR Signal	SNR Background	CNR
1	8.43	2.16	10.16
2	10.16	1.29	14.17
3	3.35	4.66	7.23
4	4.36	3.07	7.21
5	7.84	2.50	10.99
6	6.88	1.85	6.78
7	6.35	1.47	1.50
8	23.20	1.20	20.72
9	14.58	4.09	20.99
10	17.62	4.54	25.68
11	9.77	2.22	1.06
12	10.99	2.72	14.77
13	12.19	11.31	20.87
14	12.81	1.20	1.63
15	7.42	2.38	8.19
16	23.41	1.02	2.17
17	10.70	3.57	15.94
18	6.58	3.67	9.64
19	11.43	1.56	15.99
20	4.53	1.70	5.15

SNR = Signal to Noise Ratio
 CNR = Contrast to Noise Ratio

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Images of patients with varying voltages, i.e., 100 kV, 120 kV, and 140 kV, and different tube current settings were used. Figure 3 illustrates the process of determining the RoI for Signal and Background in patient images to assess the average signal for each. One image per patient was selected to calculate the SNR and CNR values. Table 5 presents the image quality results based on SNR and CNR values. For SNR, the values were calculated for both the Signal area and the Background area.

The CNR was determined by calculating the contrast, which is the difference between the RoI for the Signal and the Background areas, and then dividing this contrast by the noise.

The SNR value in the Signal area indicates how well the signal is captured compared to the noise. A maximum value signifies that some images have good quality with minimal noise, while a minimum value indicates images with poor quality due to high noise levels. The SNR value in the Background area generally shows lower SNR compared to the Signal area, indicating higher noise levels. The maximum value suggests that imaging still maintains relatively good quality in some cases, while the minimum value indicates parts of the Background with high noise, which can affect image quality and make clinical interpretation difficult.

SNR measures how clearly the signal or information contained in the image or signal stands out compared to the noise present. Higher SNR values make it easier to distinguish between the signal and the noise [25]. The maximum CNR value obtained from the examination of 20 patients was 25.68, while the minimum CNR value was 1.06. The American College of Radiology [26] specifies that for adult CT-Abdomen examinations, the CNR should reach or exceed 1. The maximum CNR indicates that, under optimal conditions, the contrast difference between the signal and the background is very clear, which facilitates diagnosis. The minimum CNR value is still above the established threshold, showing that even under the worst conditions, the images can still be used for accurate diagnosis.

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409 The CNR value is influenced by exposure 464
 410 factors, including tube voltage and slice thickness. 465
 411 Each increase in tube voltage results in variable 466
 412 changes, while variations in slice thickness lead to 467
 413 increased SNR and CNR values. Satwika et al. [27] 468
 414 stated that increasing the tube voltage can enhance 469
 415 the density of the image. Higher density results in a 470
 416 darker image. Images with high density appear 471
 417 darker, making them unsuitable for diagnosing 472
 418 diseases. If the X-ray tube voltage is too high, 473
 419 the resulting image density will increase, and the 474
 420 SNR value will decrease. Nurhayati et al. [28] 475
 421 also noted that the highest tube voltage 476
 422 variations produce the lowest CNR values. 477
 423 This indicates that with each increase in tube 478
 424 voltage, the resulting CNR value experiences 479
 425 irregular increases and decreases. Kusumaningsih 480
 426 et al. [29] stated that slice thickness variation 481
 427 has a 99.9 % influence on the SNR value, meaning 482
 428 slice thickness significantly affects the obtained 483
 429 SNR value, thereby influencing the quality 484
 430 of the resulting image. Using a thin slice thickness 485
 431 will result in a minimum SNR value due to 486
 432 the high level of noise in the image, which lowers 487
 433 the image quality. A high CNR value indicates 488
 434 less noise, leading to better contrast resolution 489
 435 in the image. 490

436 CONCLUSION

437 The radiation dose received by patients 491
 438 during an Abdominal CT-Scan varies, with a 492
 439 maximum dose of 55.11 mGy and a minimum dose 493
 440 of 9.58 mGy, which is higher than the dose produced 494
 441 by the device. This is influenced by several factors, 495
 442 such as the patient's weight, the type of protocol 496
 443 used, and the scanner settings. Although these doses 497
 444 remain within the safe limits for diagnostic 498
 445 examinations, higher doses should be considered, 499
 446 particularly at the maximum value and for patients 500
 447 requiring repeated examinations, as cumulative 501
 448 radiation exposure may increase the risk of 502
 449 long-term side effects such as cancer. Therefore, the 503
 450 ALADAIP principle should be applied to minimize 504
 451 doses without compromising image quality, utilizing 505
 452 the latest technology and techniques. The image 506
 453 quality in abdominal CT examinations, based on the 507
 454 SNR and CNR, indicates that the obtained image 508
 455 quality is sufficient for diagnostic purposes. 509

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

R. Anthon, S. H. Intifadhah and E. R. Putri
 466 equally contributed as the main contributors of this
 467 paper. All authors read and approved the final
 468 version of the paper.

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