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What is Radiology?

Radiology is defined as the branch of health science dealing with radioactive substances and radiant energy, and with the diagnosis and treatment of disease by means of both ionizing (x-rays) and non-ionizing (ultrasound) radiation. W. K. Roentgen discovered the existence of x-rays on November 8, 1895, and because the source of x-rays was unknown at the time, he named them with the scientific symbol for the unknown: “x”. Today, radiology services are used to identify, diagnose and therapeutically treat many diseases.

An x-ray is invisible electromagnetic energy produced using electric power and an x-ray tube. When electricity is applied to the x-ray tube, it creates electromagnetic energy in the form of an x-ray beam. The x-ray beam is focused on a body part, where it creates a photographic image of the dense structures inside the body.



William Roentgen discovered x-rays in 1895

Hospital radiology departments and free-standing imaging centers throughout the country are replacing films with digital x-ray systems, providing for a filmless all-digital suite. Digital radiography is the acquisition of plain radiographic images as primary computerized images, rather than exposures on film. The digital information can be printed on film or other hardcopy media, or transferred to a picture archiving and communication system (PACS), where the image can be digitally stored and viewed on high-resolution monitors for radiology interpretation.

An advantage of digitally acquired images is that they have greater latitude than film. This means that many more shades of gray are present, allowing for better contrast in parts of the body that are all white or all black on conventional plain films.