Imaging of the spine: past, present and future.

13:45 Uhr  Referent(en): Dixon A

**Kurzfassung:** As in all forms of Radiology, the advent of computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) has brought about substantial change to the way in which radiologists investigate spinal disorders. The patient is now saved the considerable discomfort which was associated with investigations such as epidural venography and radiculography and the long-term morbidity resulting from the oily contrast agents previously used for myelography. It is slowly being appreciated that standard lumbar radiography offers little benefit for the average patient with back pain and should probably be reserved for assessing problems such as potential osteoporotic fractures, scoliosis, etc. Furthermore modern clinical colleagues rely much more on the findings of CT and MRI than on the clinical examination; this leads to ever increasing radiological workloads. But even the most modern and MRI techniques do not always precisely delineate the responsible lesion, especially in an elderly patient with multiple spinal problems. Nor is it always easy to distinguish simple osteoporotic vertebral collapse from that due to metastatic involvement, discitis from disc degeneration, etc. Furthermore, the scientific community still has much work to do to discover the real cause for lumbar disc degeneration. A Nobel Prize surely awaits that scientist - and may be the answer can be found by an imaginative radiologist as our techniques evolve in the future!