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Ascension Sensors Will Play Key Role in Minimizing X-Ray Exposure to Surgeons

BURLINGTON, VERMONT; December 1, 2009: Radiology Today, a leading trade publication for interventional radiologists, has published an article in its November 30, 2009 issue highlighting the inherent danger of using radiation-emitting devices for anatomical visualization and navigation.

The article "New Guidance Systems Minimize Risk of X-Ray Exposure," by Pulitzer-prize winning writer, Steve Wagner, warns physicians that radiation can have long-term implications, such as blood-borne cancers and cataracts.

Click here to access the Wagner's Radiation Today article: Alternative Guidance Systems Minimize X-Ray Exposure.

Wagner interviewed Dr. Isador Lieberman, chairman of the Medical, Interventional and Surgical Spine Center at the Cleveland Clinic, for the article. While citing the absolute need for real-time imaging, Lieberman laments the fact that multiple new x-rays are the current standard of care.

Image Courtesy Cleveland Clinic Surgical Spine Center.

Surgical specialists often use intraoperative or procedural x-rays to visualize anatomy, position instruments, and find pathology. The inherent danger of using fluoroscopy for real-time imaging is recognized as a health hazard not just to patients but also to clinicians. A new generation of non-radiating navigation and localization devices, lead by magnetic sensors from Ascension Technology, is currently emerging as low-cost and efficient alternatives.

In the short term, he argues for greater education and new procedures to help protect clinicians themselves from overuse of X-ray beams. Long term, he sees emerging navigation techniques, which use alternate forms of energy, as a safe and accurate way to achieve the same results.

Wagner cites the use of magnetic navigation as an advantageous way to "track the tip of a flexible medical instrument for localization and targeting" purposes. Its three-dimensional sensors registered to real-time or pre-acquired imaging sources offer millimeter accuracy while sidestepping the radiation issue.

According to Wagner, Ascension Technology (www.ascension-tech.com) is in the forefront in magnetic sensing with the recent releases of its new 3D Guidance product line.