

PROTOCOL

Coincidental findings in Research Magnetic Resonance Images at the UNF

1. In case of an incidental finding, the Principle Investigator of the research project and UNF personnel* must be informed. If the Principle Investigator agrees, the anonymized images will be forwarded by the UNF to a radiologist for review.
2. The radiologist will review the anonymized images and generate a non-clinical descriptive summary, advising whether the findings seen warrant follow-up by a physician in a clinical setting.
3. The Principal Investigator of the research project will inform the participant of the situation without disclosing the nature of the finding (see Co-Incidental findings on research images: role of the PI).
4. Participants will be given the option of making their own arrangements for follow-up with a physician at an external clinic.
5. If the participant is not able to make arrangements at an external clinic, the services of a neurologist affiliated with the “Unité de Neuroimagerie Fonctionnelle” will be offered for the follow-up. With the participant’s consent, the radiologist’s summary will be made available to the neurologist.
6. With the participant’s consent, a copy of the anonymized images and the descriptive summary, along with a letter of introduction, can be forwarded to a physician who is following the participant at an external clinic.

* One of the UNF employees operating the MR scanner (e.g. Carollyn Hurst, André Cyr)

Co-incident finding in Research Images: Role of the PI Script for Researchers when there has been a coincidental finding:

Recently, you participated in a research project involving a magnetic resonance scan. An unusual feature was noticed on some of the images, so we asked a radiologist (a medical doctor who is qualified to read these images) to review the images.

The Radiologist has recommended that you follow up with a proper medical examination, since the research images may not include all of the information needed to make a clinical diagnosis.

If you wish, a copy of the images can be forwarded to your family doctor or any other physician you would like to designate.

If you do not have a family doctor, we can make arrangements for you to be seen by a neurologist associated with the Unité de Neuroimagerie Fonctionnelle.

Possible questions and suggested appropriate responses:

Possible questions	Possible answers
What should I say to my doctor?	You participated in a research project and some Magnetic Resonance Images were acquired. On reviewing the images, something unusual was noted. A radiologist reviewed the images and recommended a follow-up with your physician
Can you tell me what is wrong? What did you see? I want more details. Is it a tumour, blood vessel, multiple sclerosis.....? How big is it? Where is it? Can you please contact my doctor?	A copy of the images can be forwarded to your doctor. Once your doctor has had a chance to see you and review the images, he or she will be able to give you more information.
Do I really need to go and see a doctor? Do I need to see a specialist or a regular doctor? What should I do now? Where should I go? (clinic, hospital, emergency room) When do I need to see a doctor? (today vs. next week) Refer me to the doctor (radiologist) who has already looked at my images. I can not get an appointment before 6 months. Can I be followed here? Why can't I see a doctor here? This hospital must be full of doctors and nurses.	A radiologist has recommended that you be followed. Perhaps it would be best to follow that recommendation. Ultimately the choice is yours. The radiologist who reviewed your films is not available to follow your case; you need to see a family doctor/specialist who can review your case and follow-up, if required.

Possible questions	Possible answers
<p>Is it serious? You know more information! I demand to have an official report and my images! I want a copy of my images for my record.</p>	<p>A doctor will have to see you and review the findings before those questions can be answered. Only medical doctors are legally permitted to give diagnosis and order clinical examinations. If further testing is required, your doctor will be able to order the tests and transmit the results.</p>
<p>I do not have any health care insurance? Who will pay for additional tests?</p>	<p>If you don't have any health insurance in Quebec, you may be responsible for assuming all costs for additional tests here. You may wish to consider having the tests carried out in a location where you have active medical coverage.</p>
<p>Will I be allowed to participate in future research projects? What impact will this have on my life, health, future?</p>	<p>This will depend on the outcome of your situation; each situation is unique.</p>
<p>I insist on seeing the radiologist's review. Please give it to me now.</p>	<p>We are happy to provide you with the report, but it must be via a doctor who has been appointed as your treating physician. The radiologist who carried out this review did so under the condition that it only be reviewed and discussed with the patient by another physician.</p>