

**Interpretation of CT scan  
17HDC00415, 31 May 2018**

*Radiology service ~ Radiologist ~ Abdominal pain ~  
Pancreatic cancer ~ CT scan ~ Interpretation ~ Right 4(1)*

In 2016, a woman with a history of abdominal pain presented to her GP feeling fatigued and having experienced significant weight loss. The GP referred her to the public hospital for further investigation, and ordered a CT scan of the abdomen and pelvis. The scan was performed and a radiologist read and reported on the scan remotely the same day. The report documented his findings, noting some pancreatic atrophy and that no abnormalities were detected in the abdomen or pelvis. Subsequently, no further investigations were ordered.

The woman continued to have further investigations owing to fatigue and ongoing changes in her weight and bowel habits, and the findings of those investigations were normal. The woman was referred back to her GP.

In 2017, the woman was seen by a gastroenterologist. As the woman had abnormal blood test results, the gastroenterologist reviewed the CT scan that had been performed in 2016, and noted that pancreatic cancer was evident, and that this had not been reported at the time the scan was performed. A further CT scan performed at the public hospital indicated the presence of metastatic pancreatic cancer.

**Findings**

On reporting on the 2016 CT scan, the radiologist reported pancreatic atrophy. However, the radiologist failed to query the significance of this feature and, subsequently, failed to analyse the finding. The radiologist did not interpret the scan accurately and initiate appropriate investigations following his reporting of the pancreatic atrophy. Accordingly, the radiologist failed to provide services to the woman with reasonable care and skill, and breached Right 4(1).

**Recommendations**

In accordance with the recommendation made, the radiologist provided a written apology to the woman's family for the deficiencies identified in the care he provided.

The radiology service where the radiologist worked was asked to provide a progress report on the implementation of a peer audit system across its service.