

# Radiology Image Sharing in the Territory-Current and Future

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## Background

Digital radiology images are essential medical data widely used in both public and private sectors which aims at improving patient care by increasing the efficiency of care and reducing conventional film. While patients may seek healthcare services from both public and private sectors, sharing medical data including radiology reports and images among different healthcare providers is extraordinarily important.

## Current situation in Hong Kong

Radiology Image Sharing Pilot was launched in 2009, which was a Stage 1 Electronic Health Record (eHR) project that helped to enhance Public-Private Partnership by establishing electronic interfaces between public and private sectors for sharing radiology examination data. With the interfaces established, Hospital Authority (HA) clinicians can refer patients to receive required radiology investigations in private sectors and the data can be sent to HA. The Radi Collaboration project and Staff Radi Program are further using the pilot to improve the healthcare for HA patients and staff. In 2018, there were about 82,000 private radiology studies sent to HA by the 31 private hospitals and radiology centres. The high usage has demonstrated the successful of the pilot.

## Future development

The Pilot is a one-way sharing of radiology exam data from the private to public. With the development of territory-wide Electronic Health Record Sharing System (eHRSS), sharing radiology images among different healthcare providers will be one of the key elements. The multiple way image sharing among healthcare providers allow timely access to images and avoid unnecessary patient rescanning. However, some challenges are foreseeable due to large file size of radiology image and the technical complexity. Setting requirements on the image sharing solution, stakeholders' engagement and comprehensive testing of the system are important tasks.

## Conclusion

Sharing radiology data among healthcare providers can benefit both public and private sectors. The Stage 2 eHR radiology image sharing enables better access to patients' radiology examination record, continues future development of Public-Private Partnership projects and facilitates better use of healthcare resources. It is expected territory-wide radiology image sharing will start in 2021.