MR Procedures Growing Steadily at 3% per Year while MR Equipment Market is Poised for Replacement

(Des Plaines, IL – March 30, 2011) – According to IMV’s recent survey of magnetic resonance (MR) sites in the U.S., an estimated 30.2 million MR procedures were performed in 2010. This represents a steady increase in MR procedure growth since 2003 of ~3% per year, compared to the beginning of the decade, when the average annual growth rate from 1999 to 2003 was ~15% per year. Key drivers for procedure growth include breast MR studies, orthopedic and neuro studies, as well as a shift in patients away from procedures that produce x-ray radiation, such as CT.

“While procedures are increasing steadily, purchase plans for MR scanners over the next three years are relatively positive, with over one-third (34%) of the MR facilities planning to purchase at least one MR scanner from 2011 to 2013,” observed Lorna Young, Senior Director, Market Research at IMV. “This 34% of sites planning compares favorably to a lower percentage, 24%, of sites planning to purchase “over the next three years” reported in IMV’s prior 2007 MR industry report. The industry has been hit hard since the 2005, with legislative measures such as the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA), lower Medicare reimbursement levels, third party pre-authorization requirements, and the 2008 economic downturn, but the need for replacing MR scanners is likely to start generating an increased demand for MR scanners. The years 2002-2004 were the peak years for MR installations, so with an average replacement cycle of 8-9 years, the market is poised for replacement purchases. The MR buyers will be looking for equipment and processes that help them increase their workflow and productivity. While freestanding imaging centers are particularly sensitive to reduced reimbursements, hospitals are seeking to expand MR clinical applications and to have state-of-the-art MR technology.”

IMV’s 2010 MR Market Outlook Report describes trends in procedure utilization, the MR installed base and purchase plans, contrast media utilization and budgets, power injectors, and site operations characteristics. The report also covers adoption trends of new procedures such as echo planar imaging, MR spectroscopy, cardiac-approved MR, functional MR, and multi-channel MR. Highlights include:

- Orthopedic and neuro referrals comprise over two-thirds of MR procedures. In 2010, the two highest volume categories were “spine” with 25% and “brain” with 22% of the MR procedures, while “lower and upper extremity” procedures comprise 24% of the MR procedures.
- MR breast imaging studies almost doubled since 2007 from 645,000 to 1.1 million procedures, growing from 2% to 4% of the total number of MR procedures.
- About 17% of those planning to purchase MR are considering 3.0T systems, while 1.5T systems continue to be the preferred configuration by two-thirds of the buyers.
- Wide bore cylindrical MRs with bore widths of 70+ cm are preferred for over 60% of the planned MRs.
- While improving the department’s “capability to screen patients who might be at risk for NSF before using gadolinium contrast agents” is “5-very important” (using a scale of 1 to 5) for 52% of those surveyed, respondents do not feel this is having much impact on the volume of MR procedures; only 2% gave “5-totally agree” ratings that “patient and public concerns over gadolinium use will slow the growth of MR procedures” at their facility.

IMV's 2010 MR Market Outlook Report is based on the responses from 450+ radiology administrators/managers nationwide in U.S. short-term general hospitals and imaging centers. Their responses have been projected to the universe of ~6,800 hospitals and freestanding imaging centers in the United States that have MR scanners. For more information about IMV’s report, visit the corporate website at www.imvinfo.com or call 847-297-1404 x116 to speak with a representative.

IMV Medical Information Division is a marketing research and consulting firm founded in 1977, specializing in medical imaging and other advanced healthcare technology markets. IMV’s marketing consulting services, in combination with its databases of U.S. imaging sites with selected modalities, provide clients valuable assistance in strategic planning, customer satisfaction, product development and sales initiatives.

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