

**Non-contact infrared thermometers**

I wrote a letter to the *BMJ* last year setting out the evidence for non-contact infrared thermometry in adults.¹ Unlike paediatric use,² my conclusion was that these devices are not reliable in adults, largely because vasoconstriction of the blood supply to their foreheads and perspiration leading to a dangerously high false negative rate. A similar conclusion has been reached by the Scottish Health Technology Group, advising against their use for adults in Scottish NHS hospitals.³

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**REFERENCES**


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**Headaches in the absence of other signs do not require imaging by GPs**

Taylor *et al* provide an interesting review on the timeless conundrum of headaches and brain tumours.¹ Among the discussion they seem to advocate easier access to brain imaging in primary care. This is a shame, especially since the question was answered by a well-written study [by two of the same authors] in the *BJGP* 7 years ago.² I use that paper to teach medical students and GP trainees that the positive predictive value of a headache, for a brain tumour, is 0.09%. (In other words, if you have a headache there’s only a 0.09% chance of it being a brain tumour). A new onset seizure, on the other hand, has a PPV of 1.2% for a brain tumour. The problem with imaging people’s brains ‘just to make sure’ is, as the authors rightly point out, an incidental finding. A well carried out study showed 0.47% of healthy young men have an intracranial tumour,³ which is slightly more than the positive predictive value of a headache anyway. Taylor *et al* also, erroneously, remark ‘the commonest symptom’ of a brain tumour is headache, but in fact only 10% of people with a brain tumour ever report a headache before the diagnosis. Easier access to brain imaging for GPs will only mean one thing: more brain scans. And more brain scans means only one thing: more incidental findings.

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**Competing interests**

The author missed a brain tumour 3 years ago in a young woman presenting with headaches (the patient is now well). He has seen a similar patient have a meningioma, erroneously attributed to the patient’s headaches, resected; the headaches persisted despite the surgery and abated once the patient’s emotional state had improved.

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**Family and Friends Test**

The NHS Family and Friends Test (FFT) will be implemented into general practice in December 2014¹ and The NHS Strategic Projects Team is supporting this implementation across the Midlands and East region.

In our workshops, GPs and managers initially considered FFT another mechanism for complaints’ generation; but training has demonstrated that FFT can promote a better relationship between

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