Applying the Principles of Interpretation: The Radiology Report

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Why?
- It is the obligation of the doctor who prescribes the radiographic examination to:
  - Evaluate the images for adequacy
  - Interpret the image
  - Record the findings in the patient record in a timely manner

Why?
- Further, the patient must be informed of the findings in a timely fashion and provided with treatment options

Why?
- What if you are unable to obtain the prescribed images, such as panoramic, cephalometric, or advance imaging?
  - You may refer you patient to an Oral & Maxillofacial Radiologist.

Why?
- What if you are unable to provide the appropriate treatment
  - You may refer the patient to a specialist
How?
• A standardized form may be used to report your radiographic findings. Not surprisingly, it is called a Radiology Report.

How?
• A radiology report must contain the following information:
  - Patient name and/or unique identifier
  - Date of radiographic examination
  - Radiographs included in the examination

How?
• A radiology report must contain the following information:
  - Radiographic observations of anomalies, lesions, and the result of disease processes. Also, restorations that may not be clinically obvious should be described in the report. Poorly restored teeth should be objectively described. These may include open margins, open contacts, long or short RCT fills, etc.

How?
• A radiology report must contain the following information:
  - Descriptions of missing, tipped, rotated, and extruded teeth should be included. Unerupted teeth should be noted.
  - Charting may be used, as appropriate

How?
• A radiology report must contain the following information:
  - Radiographic Interpretation of your findings. This is a list of diseases or conditions that caused the changes from normal anatomy that you have observed.

How?
• Please remember that we do not see disease, per se, on a radiograph. Only the lesions are seen. It is our job to use the descriptions of these lesions to formulate a differential diagnosis.
How?
• For example, one may see generalized mild horizontal bone loss around the teeth. The disease that caused these lesions is generalized mild marginal periodontitis.

How?
• One must be extremely cautious in limiting the interpretation to what is directly observable on the radiograph. Therefore, descriptions such as **chronic** are generally not included, unless a second set of radiographs, exposed at a different time, is available.

How?
• A systematic approach to reporting is desirable. This will make the information more easily retrievable at a later time.
• You must interpret the entire exam, not just the **Region of Interest (ROI)**
• All of your findings must be recorded.