

Diagnostic Ultrasound Delivers Improved Care and Patient Outcomes in Podiatric Medicine

By Bob Salzman, President, 20/20 Imaging, a division of Konica Minolta Healthcare.

As a podiatrist, Kenneth R. Meisler, D.P.M., FACFAS, P.L.L.C., now believes that integrating diagnostic ultrasound into his practice “was absolutely one of the best decisions I ever made.”

However, Dr. Meisler initially delayed adding the modality to his New York City-based practice, having been skeptical about ultrasound’s ability to enhance care for his 100+ daily patients.

Today, Dr. Meisler and his colleagues are now able to provide better care and increased income for their practice.

“With ultrasound, we are better clinicians, provide improved care and better outcomes when treating patients,” he said.

Dr. Meisler’s practice has treated over 40,000 patients. And with 40 years of experience, he suggests ultrasound as an efficient means to grow business for the average podiatry practice. The technology boasts a low cost of ownership (virtually no maintenance), offers a steady reimbursement stream, and provides a safe, radiation-free way to visualize and evaluate soft tissue of the foot and ankle.

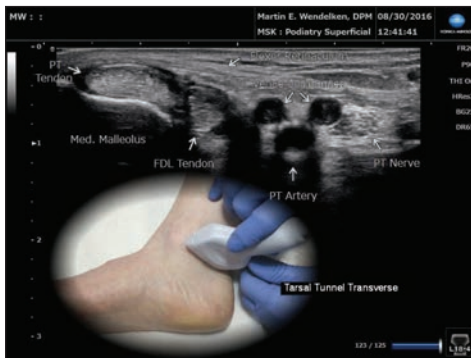
“Diagnostic ultrasound should be the first-line go-to for primary soft issue imaging,” explained Martin Wendelken, DPM, RN, FAPWAC, and a Product Specialist in Ultrasound at 20/20 Imaging. “It is a non-invasive process that allows you to confirm or discover occult pathology and is dynamic, allowing the doctor to move patient structures. You can evaluate structures in ways which cannot be duplicated with static imaging. Best of all, you provide point-of-care imaging without having to wait for answers or reports.”

For example, Dr. Meisler has changed the way he confirms neuroma diagnoses, thanks to ultrasound’s stellar visualization of soft tissue masses. Ultrasound has also enabled him to detect malignancies and then adapt treatment plans quickly, providing better care and outcomes for patients.

“Our doctors now realize using ultrasound guidance for injections (and receiving reimbursement) yields better results for our patients—nearly 100 percent of the time.”

“Podiatrists need to grasp that they have the ability to understand what’s happening with their patients before using the needle. If ultrasound gives you that capability, why not take advantage of this diagnostic tool?” Dr. Wendelken asked.

Dr. Meisler also noted that patients appreciate the confidence provided by viewing live ultrasound images in real time during their appointment.



The image shows a transverse view of the tarsal tunnel. Structures include: Posterior Tibial and Flexor Digitorum Longus tendons, PT Artery, Vena Comitantes, PT Nerve, and Flexor Retinaculum.

“Letting them see what’s going on gets them involved in their own care. And they’re impressed with what you’re doing for them, so referrals also have greatly increased,” he added.

Diagnostic ultrasound helps him make immediate soft-tissue diagnoses, which X-ray sometimes fails to achieve, and allows him to keep patients in his office, instead of referring them out for more expensive and involved MRIs.

“The ultrasound system—and resultant scan quality—of one to two decades ago has evolved dramatically,” Dr. Wendelken noted.

Unlike past transducer technology which ranged from 5-10MHz, current models, including the SONIMAGE® HS1 and the new J5 Ultrasound System from 20/20 Imaging, have a broader frequency range of 10-18 MHz. This allows for superior image quality, similar to what high-definition technology did for television viewing.

“The newer technologies also provide wireless connectivity, enabling data to be stored both on the unit and on the office server for seamless integration into many EHR systems. Current models boast color Doppler which clearly demonstrates blood flow within the image, a key determinant for assessing a possible malignancy versus a benign mass,” added Dr. Wendelken.

The 20/20 technology also has “Simple Needle Visualization” mode which highlights needles with color in soft tissue so it’s easier to visualize and perform precise guided injections, he continued.

“On older units, you had to read into the image. Here and now, the image is viewed in high resolution,” explained Dr. Wendelken.

The HS1 and J5 both boast a touch screen interface and simplified controls for operation. The systems provide an intuitive experience that lets users drag and drop phrases for labeling and identifying structures. The compact, portable design yet large high-resolution screens allows the systems to fit easily even if there’s limited space. Battery backup increases the mobility of the systems from room to room without having to reboot the scanner.

As it has for other clinical professionals, musculoskeletal ultrasound ushered in a new era of podiatric medicine. PRP and amniotic injections under guidance provides state-of-the-art medicine to numerous pathologies. Real-time examination of tissue without radiation is not only possible, it’s affordable and practical. Patients receive better care while practices improve workflow and increase their bottom line, making it a win-win for all involved.

For more information, go to www.2020imaging.net or [click here](#).