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Camera Phone as the Medium

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IN terms of health care, camera phones have been used to help diagnose a seizure¹ and from afar both to help diagnose skin lesions² and for radiologic studies in patients with acute neurologic problems.³ They have become almost ubiquitous in some operating rooms. In this figure, a resident physician is taking a picture of an operative procedure for his case logs. Presumably, camera phones will be used to take many of the pictures that appear in the journal's Images in Anesthesiology section.

Although such devices are very utilitarian, there are at least three issues to consider when these are used for submission for this section. First, the resolution of the picture may not be adequate for publication. The complete instructions for authors section contains information on figures. Camera phones can serve as a risk for infection. In one study of mobile phone use in the operating room, bacterial contamination of physician hands because of mobile phones was found in 38 of 40 physicians, and 10% were infected with human pathogenic bacteria.⁴ Therefore, use your camera phone to take pictures for this section but remember to wash your hands after you use the phone and then care for a patient. Finally, patients must be treated with privacy and dignity. Both informed consent and confidentiality are considered for any image that is published. The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors have affirmed that medical images are no different than a patient's confidential record and so should be treated that way.⁵ Institutional requirements address requirements for taking photographs of patients and may be more stringent than published guidelines. Unless essential for scientific purposes, patient identifying information should not be published. If it is published, informed consent must be obtained and the patient should see the figure for the manuscript before it is published.

References

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