COMPLAINT 1/15/2014 to consumerwatchdog.org

Cone Beam Computer Tomografy (CBCT) is a relatively new (around 10 years for universities) imaging technique that is going to revolutionize orthodontics and dental surgery. In a few minutes the CBCT will give you hundreds of "slices" of the area of interest, which can then be manipulated and studied in 3D. It will, in time, replace the traditional Panorex, apical and other common digital images.

A limiting factor has been concern over the radiation levels, but with a competent technician, using ALARA (as low as reasonably acceptabel) settings, the doses are now comparable to a traditional Panorex.

The limiting factors now are access and training. The AAO (American Association of Orthodontics) has been slow in setting up guidelines. Their main concern is liability, so last year they adviced that all images be reviewed by an oral radiologist; mainly because the CBCT can catch pathologies outside the expertise of an orthodontist.

It seems the competence of the orthodontist to understand the actual tooth part of the CBCT is still not guaranteed by some kind of course and test. This is how it is put in the Pacific Coast society of orthodontics Bulletin in 2011: "after reviewing a few dozen of them, one becomes quite comfortable evaluating the image on one's own".

My son had a CBCT done at UCSF (University of California) in 2012. It cost $ 388 and exposed him to 25 microSieverts. It was not reviewed by the oral surgeon prior to (or after) surgery, not properly looked at by the orthodontist, and even though the referral form that is posted says that the cost is $350 with a detailed pathology-specific report consisting an extra $35, that was never done either. This, on the basis of the money spent, should constitute fraud, but even more serious is the false impression you get as a parent/patient when you have a test done and think this is proof of getting state-of-the-art care.

I think the CBCT is going to be an issue for patients for many years, until it gets properly regulated. I think it is a consumer issue and hope it will interest you to look into.

Please visit my website: impactedcanine.weebly.com for more on CBCT and my son's case.