

Evidence Discussion – Bowel Obstruction (AB-20.1)

In individuals suspected of having small or large bowel obstruction, the best imaging modality is CT of the abdomen and pelvis. Such imaging plays a crucial role in both diagnosis and management. Computed tomography (CT) is more useful than plain radiographs especially in identifying the severity, location, etiology, inflammation, and complications of bowel obstructions including ischemia, necrosis, and perforation. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) can be a useful alternative to CT imaging in special populations for whom radiation exposure needs to be limited, but the higher prevalence of motion artifact may make images more difficult to interpret.

References

1. Expert Panel on Gastrointestinal Imaging. ACR Appropriateness Criteria® suspected small-bowel obstruction. American College of Radiology (ACR); 2013
2. Mullan CP, Siewert B, Eisenberg RL. Small Bowel Obstruction. American Journal of Roentgenology. 2012;198(2). doi:10.2214/ajr.10.4998.
3. Paulson EK, Thompson WM. Review of Small-Bowel Obstruction: The Diagnosis and When to Worry. Radiology. 2015;275(2):332-342. doi:10.1148/radiol.15131519.