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Why every second matters in radiology, too

A leading diagnostic clinic in Vienna – Diagnosezentrum Meidling – counts on *syngo.plaza* to help its radiologists diagnose quickly and consistently, while taking advantage of a group-wide network.



“As long as things are going well,
you don’t notice it ... and at our clinic,
things are really going well!”

Univ. Doz. Dr. Klaus Preidler
Medical Director
Diagnosezentrum Meidling, Wien

In a diagnostic center without an in-house IT department, all systems must be utterly reliable and easy to operate, day after day. Siemens' syngo.plaza delivers on all counts and adds another benefit: speed.

The most important resource in modern medicine? Time. Treatment and process quality depend on it, as does the profitability of any medical institution. That's why the search for the right PACS for Diagnosezentrum Meidling in Vienna was primarily a question of speed. The obvious answer at the time: syngo.plaza by Siemens. And today, with the new version VB20, the staff in Meidling are more satisfied with the decision than ever before.

More time = better care

"Every delay and every search costs time," says Univ. Doz. Dr. Klaus Preidler, Medical Director in Meidling. "If you multiply that by the number of patients who are waiting here for diagnosis day after day, you rack up quite a bit of time that could be put to better use." Since Meidling started using syngo.plaza, routine diagnosis has become much more rapid, efficient and reliable – in other words, the software has increased Dr. Preidler's productivity. As a radiologist, however, he is not bound by economic factors such as productivity and profitability; he is dedicated to the well-being of his patients. But because syngo.plaza's excellent performance, intuitive handling and intelligent work aids save a little bit of time at almost every step of the diagnostic process, he usually gains a few minutes per patient, which he can then use to speak with the patient, or consult with colleagues and referrers.

Diagnosis within a network

The diagnostic center and clinic in Meidling is part of a group that includes two locations in Graz and one in Schladming. The group's members – among the first centers in Austria not attached to a hospital or university – offer patients the full spectrum of computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging, and have thus helped establish modern, independent diagnostics in the alpine region. Well aware of their pioneer standing, the centers are committed to remaining at the cutting edge of medical technology. Choosing Siemens as a partner was a logical result. An equipment fleet that is homogenous across different sites offers immense advantages in terms of customer service, operator expertise and networking. The latter, in particular, plays a major role in the diagnostic group: Frequently, specialists from a wide range of disciplines, spread across the four locations, gather for virtual conferences to discuss clinical images.

The key to a successful second-opinion network? "It has to be easy and fast," Dr. Preidler insists, "like it is with syngo.plaza." Images to be evaluated jointly must reach the radiologist's colleagues in a matter of minutes, so that he can call them and receive advice. Another important networking aspect, which syngo.plaza also implemented effortlessly: central archiving. After all, the group wants to be ready for the electronic health record.

Oncology – the “data giant”

Alongside neurological and orthopedic issues, the Meidling center focuses strongly on mammography. Like most oncology exams, mammograms generate huge volumes of images, which then need to be processed and compared. What’s more, many patients have already had three to four preliminary mammograms, each with numerous additional images. Precise diagnosis of a patient being monitored during a cycle of chemotherapy, for example, often involves 5000 individual images. It’s here that *syngo.plaza*, in particular the new version VB20, reveals its full potential: Shortly after the patient has been signed into the RIS, the most recent preliminary exam automatically appears on the PACS screen – or the two most recent exams, if available and necessary. The way in which the images are arranged and displayed on the monitor can be configured to suit personal preferences. “With 15 different sequences, reconstructions, and evaluations using 3000 images, you need a layout that helps you stay oriented.” Long searches for the beginning and end of a contrast phase are an absolute no-go for Dr. Preidler: “They must always be at the same spot on the screen.” The new synchronization functions included the *syngo.plaza* update offer valuable support in this area, as well.

Intuitive and consistent

Just as important as presentation without time lags – a consistent layout. Across sequences, across preliminary exams, across patients. Only then can staff realize standardized workflows that deliver truly comparable diagnostic results. “Structural diagnostics” – Dr. Preidler’s term for it – means that recurring issues are handled using the same procedures, time after time. This way, *syngo.plaza* helps Vienna, and the entire group, maintain a consistently high level of diagnostic quality.

In the new version of *syngo.plaza*, the layout and usability were noticeably improved once again. “The interface is now a little cleaner, more logical, less distracting ... a bit smoother overall,” the Medical Director explains, praising the unrestricted image view. Nonetheless, essential functions can be called up at any time – in Meidling this primarily means navigation lines, cross-references and everything that simplifies sequence readings. Staff are also happy that the new version entailed so few changes to the user interface – after all, no-one has much time to spare for learning and adjusting to new operating concepts. The new software version was implemented with the center in full swing: “Here, we perform 50 to 70 exams a day,” Dr. Preidler reports. “So, after the software change, the first ten are a bit clumsy; after that, everything’s okay – and by the third day, you’re not even thinking about it anymore.”



Perfect service, peace of mind

Not even having to think about it – that’s also the idea behind the service contract, especially since Meidling has no IT department. “As long as things are going well, you don’t notice it,” Dr. Preidler states. “And at our clinic, things are really going well.” At those rare times when the system does have trouble, a technician is available right away – either on the phone or, if needed, on site. Additionally, someone from Siemens stops by regularly to test the software and help optimize processes further. To tease a bit more performance out of the system. To save a few more seconds. And to push diagnostics quality to an even higher level.



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