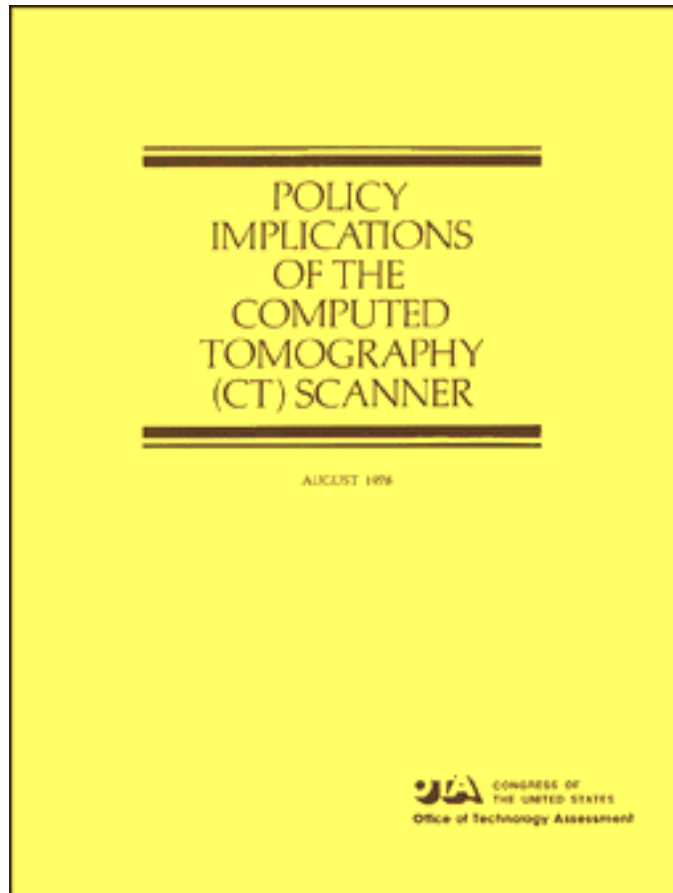


*Policy Implications of the Computed
Tomography (CT) Scanner*

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FOREWORD

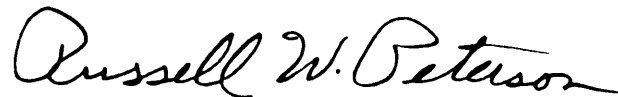
This study, Policy Implications of the Computed Tomography (CT) Scanner, was requested by the Senate Committee on Finance and the Senate Committee on Human Resources. It examines the CT scanner, an expensive, new diagnostic device that combines X-ray and computer equipment. The CT scanner has been rapidly and enthusiastically accepted by the medical community in this country since its introduction in 1973. It is a medical technology whose development and use illustrate many important issues of health policy.

The Senate Committee on Finance requested the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) to consider such aspects of the CT scanner as "its usefulness, its costs, its effect on medical care delivery patterns, and ways to improve planning affecting such devices. "

The Senate Committee on Human Resources requested OTA "to examine current Federal policies and current medical practices to determine whether a reasonable amount of justification should be provided before costly new medical technologies and procedures are put into general use. " The Committee specifically asked that issues of efficacy and safety be addressed: "Before new drugs can be used, proof of efficacy and safety must be provided. However, no such legal requirement applies to other new technologies. "

The study was conducted by staff of the OTA Health Program with the assistance of the OTA Health Program Advisory Committee. The resulting report is a synthesis and does not necessarily reflect the position of any individual.

In accordance with its mandate to provide unbiased information to Congress, OTA has attempted in this report to present information accurately and to analyze that information objectively. The report contains no recommendations, but instead identifies a range of alternative policies for consideration by Congress. The views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the OTA Board, the OTA Advisory Council, or their individual members.



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