

Outliers

ASIDES & INSIDES

Just 3,000 years later, and Meresamun gets her CT scan

Talk about a long wait for an appointment. After almost 3,000 years, an Egyptian woman known as Meresamun finally was able to get a CT scan using the latest equipment—though it probably didn't do her much good.

Back in her day, around 800 B.C. it's believed, Meresamun was likely a singer who performed at a temple in Thebes while a priest conducted rituals for the god Amon, according to curators at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute Museum. The museum has been holding onto her body for some 80 years, keeping it encased in her sarcophagus fearful that opening it would damage its elaborate decorations.

The university said radiologists X-rayed the sarcophagus in 1989 and then gave it a CT scan two or three years later. Last summer, the radiologists gave Meresamun a "callback" so she could be examined with their latest gizmo: a Philips Healthcare Brilliance iCT 256-slice scanner. It's believed Meresamun was tall for her time—about 5 feet, 6 inches—with "wide-spaced eyes," and an overbite. They think she died around age 30 in relatively good health, according to a university publication.

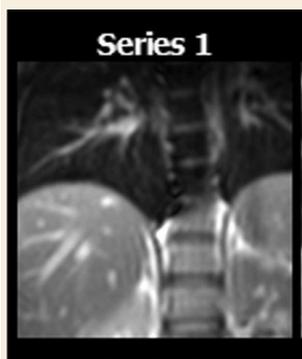
A video documenting the CT scan—which also created a 3-D "virtual unwrapping"—is part of an exhibit that will be on display at the museum through Dec. 6. As further proof that one is never too old to start using the Internet, the museum has given Meresamun her own Facebook page. To become her friend, go to the site and search for "Mummy Meresamun."

Have you seen my endoscopy?

And if Meresamun wants to share her medical images with her friends, of course now there's a place to do it. It seems a Durham, N.C.-based company has made it possible for patients to archive and share their medical images with whomever they wish.

The company, Heart Imaging Technologies, is a provider of picture archiving communications and storage, or PACS, software systems, which

doctors can use to share and transport digitized medical images such as X-rays and sonograms via computer. To date, the digitized images have



only been readable using expensive PACS systems, which means patients haven't had access to their own medical images, explains Brent Reed, vice president of marketing and sales for Heart Imaging Technologies. Now, a new Web site called HeartIT allows patients to upload and share diagnostic-quality medical images using a standard Web browser. All patients have to do is ask their radiologist to provide a copy of the image on CD.

Users of the Web site can upload and archive up to 25 medical images

free of charge, Reed says. The system uses the same encryption technology used by banks to secure their Web sites, he adds.

A tale of the recession

Talk about passing the buck.

Outliers has seen some creative belt-tightening from employers during these tough economic times—unpaid furloughs, job shares, reduced hours and wage freezes.

But the Meriden (Conn.) Board of Education has come up with a novel approach. The board is mulling cash incentives to teachers who switch to their spouses' health insurance plans.

The proposal, presented to the board's financial subcommittee late last month, could, in theory, save millions in healthcare costs. The district covers between 88% and 90% of total health insurance costs of about 1,000 employees, plus their family members. Employee health-care spending is budgeted at \$13.5 million next year, up \$1 million over this year.

The district could use a cash bonus, perhaps as much as \$5,000, one board member suggested, to entice employees to switch themselves and family members to the healthcare plan of a working spouse. The city of Meriden already offers between \$1,000 and \$1,500 to its workers to drop out of its health insurance program but has had few takers, according to the *Meriden Record-Journal*.

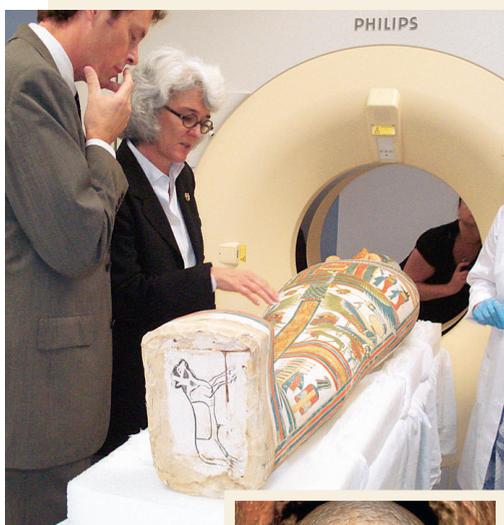
A disease by any other name ...

Yohei Sasakawa wants to give Hansen's disease patients some respect. As the World Health Organization's goodwill ambassador for the elimination of Hansen's disease (otherwise known as leprosy) as well as Japan's goodwill ambassador for the Human Rights of People Affected by Leprosy, he is calling for ending the use of the word "leper" as a substitute for "social outcast."

"Unfortunately its use continues to this day in the news media, including the U.K. media, impacting on the dignity and human rights of people with the disease," said Sasakawa while speaking at the Fourth Global Appeal to End Stigma and Discrimination Against People Affected by Leprosy event in London.

Outliers will do its part and avoid using "leper" in that context. We will avoid it like the plague.

Pariahs, by the way, could not be reached for comment.



Meresamun got special treatment for her CT scan, which gave museum curators a peek inside her sarcophagus.

