



EDITED BY

Nick Watson
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CHAPMAN & NAKIELNY'S GUIDE TO

Radiological Procedures

SEVENTH EDITION

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CHAPMAN & NAKIELNY'S
GUIDE TO
**RADIOLOGICAL
PROCEDURES**

For Carole, Alexander and Liv
For Richard and Emer



CHAPMAN & NAKIELNY'S

GUIDE TO RADIOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

Edited by

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Contents

1 General notes

David M. Rosewarne

Radiology 1

Radionuclide Imaging 9

 Radiopharmaceuticals 9

Computed Tomography 11

Magnetic Resonance Imaging 13

 Safety in Magnetic Resonance Imaging 14

Ultrasonography 19

2 Intravascular contrast media

David M. Rosewarne

Historical Development of Radiographic Agents 21

Adverse Effects of Intravenous Water-Soluble Contrast Media 25

 Toxic Effects on Specific Organs 25

 Idiosyncratic Reactions 28

 Mechanisms of Idiosyncratic Contrast Medium Reactions 30

 Prophylaxis of Adverse Contrast Medium Effects 30

Contrast Agents in Magnetic Resonance Imaging 33

 Historical Development 33

 Mechanism of Action 33

 Gadolinium 34

 Gastrointestinal Contrast Agents 38

Contrast Agents in Ultrasonography 39

3 Gastrointestinal tract

Ingrid Britton

 Methods of Imaging the Gastrointestinal Tract 43

Introduction to Contrast Media 43

 Water-Soluble Contrast Agents 43

 Gases 44

 Barium 45

 Pharmacological Agents 46

Contrast Swallow	49
Barium Meal	51
Small Bowel Follow-Through	55
Small-Bowel Enema	57
Barium Enema	60
Enema Variants	63
The 'Instant' Enema	64
Air Enema	64
Reduction of an Intussusception	65
Contrast Enema in Neonatal Low Intestinal Obstruction	68
Sinogram	69
Retrograde Ileogram	69
Colostomy Enema	70
Loopogram	70
Herniogram	70
Evacuating Proctogram	72
Coeliac Axis, Superior Mesenteric and Inferior Mesenteric Arteriography	73
Ultrasound of the Gastrointestinal Tract	74
Endoluminal Examination of the Oesophagus and Stomach	74
Transabdominal Examination of the Lower Oesophagus and Stomach	75
Hypertrophic Pyloric Stenosis	75
Small Bowel	75
Appendix	76
Large Bowel	76
Endoluminal Examination of the Anus	76
Endoluminal Examination of the Rectum	77
Computed Tomography of the Gastrointestinal Tract	78
Computed Tomographic Colonography	80
Complications	81
Aftercare	81
Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Gastrointestinal Tract	82
Radionuclide Gastro-Oesophageal Reflux Study	85
Radionuclide Gastric-Emptying Study	87
Radionuclide Meckel's Diverticulum Scan	89
Radionuclide Imaging of Gastrointestinal Bleeding	90
Labelled White Cell Scanning in Inflammatory Bowel Disease	92

4 Liver, biliary tract and pancreas

Ingrid Britton

- Methods of Imaging the Hepatobiliary System 93
- Methods of Imaging the Pancreas 93
- Plain Films 94
- Ultrasound of The Liver 94
- Ultrasound of the Gallbladder and Biliary System 96
- Ultrasound of the Pancreas 98
- Computed Tomography of the Liver and Biliary Tree 99
- Computed Tomographic Cholangiography 101
- Computed Tomography of the Pancreas 102
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Liver 103
- Magnetic Resonance Cholangiopancreatography 106
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Pancreas 106
- Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography 107
 - Intraoperative Cholangiography 110
 - Postoperative (T-Tube) Cholangiography 111
- Percutaneous Transhepatic Cholangiography 112
 - External Biliary Drainage 115
 - Internal Biliary Drainage 115
 - Percutaneous Extraction of Retained Biliary Calculi (Burhenne Technique) 117
- Angiography 118
 - Coeliac Axis, Superior Mesenteric and Inferior Mesenteric Arteriography 118
- Radionuclide Imaging of Liver and Spleen 119
- Radionuclide Hepatobiliary and Gallbladder Radionuclide Imaging 121
- Investigation of Specific Clinical Problems 123
 - The Investigation of Liver Tumours 123
 - The Investigation of Jaundice 124
 - The Investigation of Pancreatitis 125
 - Pancreatic Pseudocysts 125

5 Urinary tract

Peter Guest

- Plain Film Radiography 128
- Intravenous Excretion Urography 128
- Ultrasound of the Urinary Tract 130
- Computed Tomography of the Urinary Tract 132

Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Urinary Tract	135
Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Prostate	136
Magnetic Resonance Urography	137
Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Adrenals	138
Magnetic Resonance Renal Angiography	138
Micturating Cystourethrography	138
Ascending Urethrography in the Male	140
Retrograde Pyeloureterography	141
Conduitogram	142
Percutaneous Renal Cyst Puncture and Biopsy	143
Percutaneous Antegrade Pyelography and Nephrostomy	144
Percutaneous Nephrolithotomy	146
Renal Arteriography	148
Static Renal Radionuclide Scintigraphy	149
Dynamic Renal Radionuclide Scintigraphy	151
Direct Radionuclide Micturating Cystography	153

6 Image guided ablation techniques for cancer treatment

Tze Min Wah

Types of Ablative Technology	155
Radiofrequency Ablation	155
Microwave Ablation	156
Cryoablation	157
Irreversible Electroporation	158
Tips	160
Key Challenges	160

7 Reproductive system

Balashanmugam Rajashanker

Hysterosalpingography	163
Ultrasound of the Female Reproductive System	166
Ultrasound of the Scrotum	168
Computerized Tomography of the Reproductive System	169
Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Reproductive System	169
Gynaecological Malignancy	171
Cervical Cancer	171
Uterine Carcinoma	171
Ovarian Cancer	172
Omental Biopsy	173

Pet Computerized Tomography 174

Uterine Artery Embolization 174

8 Respiratory system

Nick Watson

Computed Tomography of the Thorax 177

Computed Tomography-Guided Lung Biopsy 179

Methods of Imaging Pulmonary Embolism 182

Radionuclide Lung Ventilation/Perfusion Imaging 183

Computed Tomography in the Diagnosis of Pulmonary Emboli 186

Pulmonary Arteriography 187

Magnetic Resonance of Pulmonary Emboli 188

Ultrasound of the Diaphragm—The ‘Sniff Test’ 190

Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Respiratory System 191

PET and PET-CT of the Respiratory System 192

9 Heart

Hefin Jones

Angiocardiography 193

Coronary Arteriography 195

Cardiac Computed Tomography 198

Cardiac Magnetic Resonance 203

Radionuclide Ventriculography 206

Radionuclide Myocardial Perfusion Imaging 209

10 Arterial system

Chris Day

Noninvasive Imaging 217

Vascular Ultrasound 217

Computed Tomographic Angiography 218

Peripheral (Lower Limb) Computed Tomographic Angiography 218

Magnetic Resonance Angiography 219

Vascular Access 220

General Complications of Catheter Techniques 227

Angiography 229

Angioplasty 230

Stents 233

Catheter-Directed Arterial Thrombolysis 234

Vascular Embolization 236

Thoracic and Abdominal Aortic Stent Grafts 238

11 Venous system

Chris Day

Ultrasound 243

Lower Limb Venous Ultrasound 244

Upper Limb Venous Ultrasound 245

Computed Tomography 245

Magnetic Resonance 246

Peripheral Venography 247

Lower Limb 247

Upper Limb 249

Central Venography 250

Superior Vena Cavography 250

Inferior Vena Cavography 250

Portal Venography 251

Transhepatic Portal Venous Catheterization 253

Venous Interventions 254

Venous Angioplasty and Stents 254

Gonadal Vein Embolization 255

Inferior Vena Cava Filters 256

Thrombolysis 258

Pulmonary Embolism 260

12 Radionuclide imaging in oncology and infection

Peter Guest

Positron Emission Tomography Imaging 263

2-[¹⁸F]Fluoro-2-Deoxy-D-Glucose Positron Emission Tomography Scanning 264

Other Pet Radiopharmaceuticals 267

¹⁸F-Choline 267

¹⁸F-Fluoride 267

⁶⁸Gallium-Labelled Pharmaceuticals 267

⁶⁷Gallium Radionuclide Tumour Imaging 268

Radioiodine Metaiodobenzylguanidine Scan 268

Somatostatin Receptor Imaging 270

Lymph Node and Lymphatic Channel Imaging 272

Radiography 272

Ultrasound 272

Computed Tomography 272

Magnetic Resonance Imaging 273

Radiographic Lymphangiography 273

Radionuclide Lymphoscintigraphy 273

Radionuclide Imaging of Infection and Inflammation 276

13 Bones and joints

Philip Robinson and James Rankine

Musculoskeletal Magnetic Resonance Imaging—General Points 280

Arthrography—General Points 282

Arthrography 283

Arthrography—Site-Specific Issues 286

Knee 286

Hip 287

Shoulder 289

Elbow 294

Wrist 295

Ankle 296

Tendon Imaging 298

General Points 299

Ultrasound of the Paediatric Hip 299

Thermoablation of Musculoskeletal Tumours 300

Radionuclide Bone Scan 303

14 Brain

Amit Herwadkar

Computed Tomography of the Brain 308

Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Brain 309

Imaging of Intracranial Haemorrhage 311

Computed Tomography 311

Magnetic Resonance Imaging 312

Imaging of Gliomas 313

Computed Tomography 313

Magnetic Resonance Imaging 313

Imaging of Acoustic Neuromas 314

Computed Tomography 314

Magnetic Resonance Imaging 314

Radionuclide Imaging of the Brain 315

Conventional Radionuclide Brain Scanning (Blood–Brain Barrier Imaging) 315

Regional Cerebral Blood Flow Imaging 315

Positron Emission Tomography 317

- 201Thallium Brain Scanning 318
- Dopamine Transporter Ligands 319
- Ultrasound of the Infant Brain 320
- Cerebral Angiography 321

15 Spine

James Rankine

- Imaging Approach to Back Pain and Sciatica 326
- Conventional Radiography 327
- Computed Tomography and Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Spine 328
- Myelography 330
 - Contrast Media 330
 - Cervical Myelography 330
 - Lumbar Myelography 332
 - Thoracic Myelography 335
 - Cervical Myelography by Lumbar Injection 336
 - Computed Tomography Myelography 336
 - Paediatric Myelography 336
 - Lumbar Discography 337
- Intradiscal Therapy 340
- Facet Joint/Medial Branch Blocks 340
- Percutaneous Vertebral Biopsy 341
- Bone Augmentation Techniques 343
- Nerve Root Blocks 343
 - Lumbar Spine 343
 - Cervical Spine 344

16 Lacrimal system, salivary glands, thyroid and parathyroids

Polly S. Richards

- Digital Subtraction and Computed Tomography Dacryocystography 345
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging of Lacrimal System 346
- Ultrasound 347
- Conventional and Digital Subtraction Sialography 348
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging Sialography 350
- Contrast Enhanced Magnetic Resonance Imaging and Computed Tomography 350
- Ultrasound of Thyroid 351
- Ultrasound of Parathyroid 351

Computed Tomography and Magnetic Resonance Imaging of Thyroid and Parathyroid 352

Radionuclide Thyroid Imaging 352

Radionuclide Parathyroid Imaging 354

17 Breast

Hilary Dobson

Methods of Imaging the Breast 357

Mammography 357

Ultrasound 360

Magnetic Resonance Imaging 361

Radionuclide Imaging 363

Image-Guided Breast Biopsy 363

Preoperative Localization 365

18 Role of the radiographer and the nurse in interventional radiology

Dawn Hopkins and Nick Watson

Role of the Radiographer in Interventional Radiology 367

Role of the Nurse in Interventional Radiology 370

19 Patient consent

Floriana Coccia and Jonathan S. Freedman

Introduction 375

Voluntariness 375

Information 376

Capacity 378

Assessment of Capacity 378

Supporting Patients in Decision Making 379

Acting for a Person Who Lacks Capacity 380

Documenting Assessment of Capacity 382

Shared Decision Making 382

20 Sedation and monitoring

Zahid Khan

Sedation 385

Drugs 387

Local Anaesthesia 387

Inhalational Analgesia 387

Intravenous Analgesia 387

- Sedative Drugs 389
- Monitoring 392
 - Sedation and Monitoring for Magnetic Resonance Imaging 394
 - Recovery and Discharge Criteria 394

21 Medical emergencies

Zahid Khan

- Equipment 395
- Respiratory Emergencies 397
- Respiratory Depression 397
- Laryngospasm 397
- Bronchospasm 397
- Aspiration 398
- Pneumothorax 398
- Cardiovascular Emergencies 399
- Hypotension 399
- Tachycardia 399
- Bradycardia 400
- Adverse Drug Reactions 400
 - Contrast Media Reaction 400
 - Local Anaesthetic Toxicity 402

Appendix I Average effective dose equivalents for some common examinations 403

Appendix II Dose limits – the Ionising Radiation Regulations 1999 405

Appendix III The Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2000 with the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 and the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 407

- Schedule 1 416
- Schedule 2 417

Index 421



Preface

It is now nearly forty years ago since the first edition of the guide was published and, although radiological techniques and procedures continue to evolve and expand, we have kept to the original concept of the first edition of the guide– to provide a single compact source reflecting the vast range of imaging techniques and radiological interventional procedures. Each chapter has been thoroughly reviewed and updated to reflect new advances in imaging techniques and evolving indications for examinations and procedures. As in previous editions, the chapters will also reflect where older examinations are now reserved only for very limited specific indications or have been completely superseded. This particularly the case as modern multislice CT and MR continue to evolve and displace more outmoded techniques.

We have introduced new chapters on Ablative Techniques which are becoming increasingly established as therapeutic alternatives to conventional surgical procedures, and on the Role of the Radiographer and the Nurse in Procedural Radiology to reflect the fundamental importance of the team approach to providing a safe and effective, modern interventional imaging service. We have also included, as an on-line resource, selected Single-Best-Answer questions to allow readers to test their understanding of the material in each chapter which we hope readers will find useful.

We hope this guide continues to be a helpful and practical source of information not only for radiologists but also for radiographers and nurses who are vital members of the integrated teams delivering modern radiological practice

Nick Watson
Hefin Jones



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CHAPTERS 8 AND 18

General notes

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RADIOLOGY

The procedures are laid out under a number of subheadings which follow a standard sequence. The general order is outlined as follows, together with certain points that have been omitted from the discussion of each procedure in order to avoid repetition. Minor deviations from this sequence will be found in the text where this is felt to be more appropriate.

Methods

A description of the technique for each procedure.

Indications

Appropriate clinical reasons for using each procedure.

Contraindications

All radiological procedures carry a risk. The risk incurred by undertaking the procedure must be balanced against the benefit to the patient that is expected to be gained from the information obtained. Contraindications may be relative (the majority) or absolute. Factors that increase the risk to the patient can be categorised under three headings: due to radiation, due to the contrast medium and due to the technique.

Risk due to radiation

Radiation effects on humans may be:

- hereditary—i.e. revealed in the offspring of the exposed individual; or
- somatic injuries, which fall into two groups—deterministic and stochastic.
 1. Deterministic effects result in loss of tissue function—e.g. skin erythema and cataracts. If the radiation dose is distributed over a period of time, cellular mechanisms allow tissue repair. There is then greater tolerance than if the dose had been administered all at once. This implies a threshold dose above which the tissue

will exhibit damage, because the radiation dose exceeds the capabilities of cellular repair mechanisms.

2. Stochastic effects refer to random modifications to cell components, such as DNA mutations that can occur at any radiation dose; there is no threshold for stochastic effects.¹ Stochastic effects, such as malignancy, are 'all or none'. The cancer produced by a small dose is the same as the cancer produced by a large dose, but the frequency of occurrence is less with the smaller dose.

The current consensus held by international radiological protection organisations is that for comparatively low doses, the risk of both radiation-induced cancer and hereditary disease is assumed to increase linearly with increasing radiation dose, with no threshold (the so-called linear no threshold model).² It is impossible to totally avoid staff and patient exposure to radiation. The adverse effects of radiation, therefore, cannot be completely eliminated but must be minimised. There is a small but significant excess of cancers following diagnostic levels of irradiation—e.g. during childhood³ and to the female breast⁴—and amongst those with occupational radiation exposure.⁵ In the UK about 0.6% of the overall cumulative risk of cancer by the age of 75 years could be attributable to diagnostic x-rays. The most important factors which influence the risk of developing cancer after exposure to ionising radiation are: (a) genetic considerations (specific gene mutations and family history); (b) age at exposure (children are, in general, more radiosensitive than adults); (c) gender (there is a slightly increased risk in females); and (d) fractionation and protraction of exposure (higher dose and dose rate increase risk because of the influence of DNA damage).⁶ Typical average effective dose equivalents for some common examinations are given in [Appendix I](#).

There are legal regulations which guide the use of diagnostic radiation (see [Appendices II and III](#)). These are the two basic principles:

1. Justification that a proposed examination is of net benefit to the patient.
2. ALARP—doses should be kept 'As Low As Reasonably Practicable', with economic and social factors being taken into account.⁷

Justification is particularly important when considering the irradiation of women of reproductive age, because of the risks to the developing fetus. The mammalian embryo and fetus are highly radiosensitive. The potential risks of in utero radiation exposure on a developing fetus include both teratogenic and carcinogenic effects. The risk of each effect depends on the gestational age at the time of the exposure and the absorbed radiation dose. The developing fetus is most vulnerable to radiation effects on the central

nervous system between 8 and 15 weeks of gestational age, and the risk of development of fatal childhood cancer may be greater if exposure occurs earlier in pregnancy.⁸ The teratogenic risk of radiation is dose-dependent, and exposure to ionising radiation doses of less than 50 mGy has not been shown to be associated with different pregnancy outcomes, compared with exposure to background radiation alone.⁸ The carcinogenic risk of ionising radiation is harder to calculate accurately. It is thought that the risk for the general population of developing childhood cancer is 1 in 500.⁹ For a fetal radiation dose of 30 mGy, the best estimate is of one excess cancer per 500 fetuses exposed,¹⁰ resulting in a doubling of the natural rate. Most diagnostic radiation procedures will lead to a fetal absorbed dose of less than 1 mGy for imaging not directly irradiating the maternal abdomen/pelvis and less than 10 mGy for direct abdominal/pelvic or nuclear medicine imaging.

Almost always, if a diagnostic radiology examination is medically indicated, the risk to the mother of not doing the procedure is greater than the risk of potential harm to the fetus. However, whenever possible, alternative investigation techniques not involving ionising radiation should be considered before making a decision to use ionising radiation in a female of reproductive age. It is extremely important to have a robust process in place that prevents inappropriate or unnecessary ionising radiation exposure to the fetus. Joint guidance from the Health Protection Agency, the College of Radiographers and the Royal College of Radiologists recommends the following⁹:

When a female of reproductive age presents for an examination in which the primary beam irradiates the pelvic area, or for a procedure involving radioactive isotopes, she should be asked whether she is or might be pregnant. If the patient cannot exclude the possibility of pregnancy, she should be asked if her menstrual period is overdue. Her answer should be recorded, and depending on the answer, the patient should be assigned to one of the following four groups:

1. **No possibility of pregnancy.** Proceed with the examination.
2. **Patient definitely or probably pregnant.** Review the justification for the proposed examination and decide whether to defer until after delivery, bearing in mind that delaying an essential procedure until later in pregnancy may present a greater risk to the fetus and a procedure of clinical benefit to the mother may also be of indirect benefit to her unborn child. If, after review, a procedure is still considered to be justified and is undertaken, the fetal dose should be kept to the minimum consistent with the diagnostic purpose.
3. **Low-dose examination, pregnancy cannot be excluded.** A low-dose examination is defined as one in which the fetal dose is likely

to be below 10 mGy. The vast majority of diagnostic examinations fall into this category. If pregnancy cannot be excluded but the patient's menstrual period is not overdue, proceed with the examination. If the patient's period is overdue, the patient should be treated as probably pregnant and the advice provided in the previous section should be followed.

4. **High-dose examination, pregnancy cannot be excluded.** A high-dose procedure is defined as any examination which results in a fetal dose greater than 10 mGy (e.g. CT of the maternal abdomen and pelvis). The evidence suggests that such procedures may double the natural risk of childhood cancer if carried out after the first 3–4 weeks of pregnancy and may still involve a small risk of cancer induction if carried out in the very early stages of an unrecognised pregnancy. Either of two courses can be adopted to minimise the likelihood of inadvertent exposure of an unrecognised pregnancy: (a) apply the rule that females of childbearing potential are always booked for these examinations during the first 10 days of their menstrual cycle when conception is unlikely to have occurred; or (b) female patients of childbearing potential are booked in the normal way but are not examined and are rebooked if, when they attend, they are in the second half of their menstrual cycle *and* are of childbearing potential *and* in whom pregnancy cannot be excluded.

If the examination is necessary, evaluation of the fetal dose and associated risks by a medical physicist should be arranged, if possible, and discussed with the parents. A technique that minimises the number of views and the absorbed dose per examination should be utilised. However, the quality of the examination should not be reduced to the level where its diagnostic value is impaired. The risk to the patient of an incorrect diagnosis may be greater than the risk of irradiating the fetus. Radiography of areas that are remote from the pelvis and abdomen may be safely performed during pregnancy, with good collimation and lead protection. The Royal College of Radiologists' guidelines indicate that legal responsibility for radiation protection lies with the employer, the extent to which this responsibility is delegated to the individual radiologist varies. Nonetheless, all clinical radiologists carry a responsibility for the protection from unnecessary radiation of:

- patients;
- themselves;
- other members of staff; and
- members of the public, including relatives and carers.¹¹

Risk due to the contrast medium

The risks associated with administration of iodinated contrast media and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) contrast are discussed in

detail in [Chapter 2](#), and guidelines are given for prophylaxis of adverse reactions to intravascular contrast.

Contraindications to other contrast media, e.g. barium, water-soluble contrast media for the gastrointestinal tract and biliary contrast media are given in the relevant sections.

Risks due to the technique

Skin sepsis at the needle puncture site can occur very rarely.

Specific contraindications to individual techniques are discussed with each procedure.

Contrast Medium

Volumes given are for a 70-kg man.

Equipment

For many procedures, this will also include a trolley with a sterile upper shelf and a nonsterile lower shelf. Emergency drugs and resuscitation equipment should be readily available (see [Chapter 21](#)).

See [Chapter 10](#) for introductory notes on angiography catheters.

If only a simple radiography table and overcouch tube are required, then this information has been omitted from the text.

Patient preparation

1. Will admission to the hospital be necessary?
2. If the patient is a woman of childbearing age, the examination should be performed at a time when the risks to a possible fetus are minimal (as described previously). Any female presenting for radiography or a nuclear medicine examination at a time when her period is known to be overdue should be considered as pregnant, unless there is information indicating the absence of pregnancy. If her cycle is so irregular that it is difficult to know whether a period has been missed and it is not practicable to defer the examination until menstruation occurs, then a pregnancy test may be considered. Particular care should be taken to perform hysterosalpingography during the first 10 days of the menstrual cycle, so that the risks of mechanical trauma in early pregnancy are reduced.
3. Except in emergencies, in circumstances when consent cannot be obtained, patient consent to treatment is a legal requirement for medical care.¹² Consent should be obtained in a suitable environment and only after appropriate and relevant information has been given to the patient.¹³ Patient consent may take the following forms:
 - (a) Implied consent. For a very low-risk procedure, the patient's actions at the time of the examination will indicate whether he or she consents to the procedure to be performed.
 - (b) Express consent. For a procedure of intermediate risk, such as barium enema, express consent should be given by the patient, either verbally or in writing.