



Soft tissue injury
without a
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Don't know
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Would you feel better if I put a 😊 on it?

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"Emojis are by no means taking away from our written language but rather accentuating it by providing a tone that words on their own often cannot. They are, in a sense, the most evolved form of punctuation we have at our disposal."

—Emmy J. Favilla

I was schooled in the art of emojis by a true ninja: my daughter. She was actually an early adopter of the key-stroke-saving abbreviations—LOL, IMHO, among others. And Lord, is she a fast texter. I distinctly remember the talk I had with the phone company over the messaging charges I had to pay after she got her first text-capable cell phone; neither they, nor I, had ever seen anything like it. She became an immediate telecom service emblem—the girl who texted more than anyone in history. And I became the dad who paid the bill for said girl.

Emojis were next in her armamentarium. First, the smiley face 😊. That was pretty obvious; it puts a little emotion into the message, and it *is* useful. Others followed soon after—the wink 😉, the frown 😞—and then a veritable flood of emojis for all occasions: the birthday cake 🍰; the martini glass 🍸 etc.

The reason I bring this up is that lately there has been a large push to “modernize” radiology reports, and by modernize, I mean make them harder for readers to get to the important parts. No, that is a bit too cynical, and I apologize. You all know what I mean: we are supposed to make our reports a true reflection of the twenty-first century, with images and graphs and charts and maybe voice or video and some media OTHER THAN with just the words and meaning of the exam we are interpreting. In other words, different from the way that we’ve done it—

successfully, I might add—forever.

Frankly, I’m not opposed to any of that, as long as I don’t have to do any more work. Hey, I’m busy enough as it is—reading the study, comparing it to the old study, answering the phone, watching the list explode, teaching residents and fellows, talking to patients, techs, and referring doctors who wander by, and all while dictating and not having lunch or another coffee while (hopefully) maintaining my sanity.

But the notion of adding emojis to radiology reports strikes me as something I definitely want to contemplate, because that is how my mind operates.

Think about it. Inserting a 😊 emoji in a normal report is almost a given. Heck, you don’t even need the report. Doctor sends you a patient for a head CT that turns out normal? Send back that 😊. End of discussion. Soft tissue injury without a fracture? Shoot back a 😊. Don’t know the diagnosis? 🤔 will do the job. Need to issue a less-than-optimal report—add 😞 or 😞.

Want to say thanks for the consult? What else—balloons 🎈🎈🎈! That bizarre request with confusing history that you recommended against but did anyway and turned out to be normal? 😂. Want to make sure they look at the images? 👁️👁️. There are even emojis that depict surgeons—👨🏻‍⚕️—so if I’m recommending you get a surgical consult you can be assured one of those will be in my report.

I really think we could run with this; they say emojis are the emotions you want to place in a message that you might not be able to find the words for, so for us, they seem to be a natural. Welcome to twenty-first century radiology reporting in a way that truly speeds the workday.

Keep doing that good work. Mahalo. 😊.