



MEDIA RELEASE

15th November 2006

NEW CT TECHNOLOGY FIRST IN AUSTRALIA - MAJOR IMPLICATIONS FOR DIAGNOSIS OF PATIENTS WITH CARDIAC AND OTHER DISEASE

The Sydney Adventist Hospital ('the San') at Wahroonga in NSW has joined the ranks of elite medical institutions around the world with the installation of a new generation Computer Tomography (CT) scanner that radiologists, cardiologists and other specialists have heralded revolutionises imaging of the heart and body.

The installation of the Dual Source Computer Tomography Scanner is the first in Australia and is expected to allow 'one stop diagnosis' across a range of conditions as it quickly produces easily obtained clear images of what's happening inside the human body and allows quick non invasive diagnosis of potentially life threatening conditions.

The Siemen's Dual Source CT Scanner is particularly exciting to radiologists and cardiologists because of its ability to scan 'faster than a beating heart' and create 'motion free' images of the heart - a major benefit in assisting quick diagnosis of cardiac disease. A cardiac scan takes 9 seconds and uses half the radiation dose of older scanning technology. Since 50,000 Australians die from cardiac disease each year, and thousands of people present to hospital emergency care departments with undiagnosed chest pain, the technology can save time, money and lives.

For scans of the heart, the speed removes the necessity for patients to take beta blockers to slow their heart and accordingly more patients can now be scanned. Obese and taller patients can also be scanned. The dual energy capacity of the new technology that allows soft tissue differentiation will also have major implications for diagnosis.

Dr Peter Illes is an interventional cardiologist at the Sydney Adventist Hospital.

"Heart disease kills more people in Australia each year than car accidents and all the cancers combined - cardiovascular disease caused 39% of deaths in 2000 while coronary heart disease is the single largest cause of death in Australia each year. This new technology means we will be able to identify people who despite showing no symptoms are at risk of heart attack."

"The new CT scanner has particular implications for the thousands of patients who present every year to Emergency Care Departments around Australia with chest pain - and for the Dr's who urgently need to diagnose what's causing the pain. With this new technology we'll be able to immediately and easily identify what's causing chest pain - and whether our patients need our intervention to save their lives."

"One of the truly revolutionary benefits of this new technology is that the images are now so clear, for the first time, I can see early plaques in arteries which can be treated before causing heart attacks. It will help rule out disease so that expensive and invasive procedures can be avoided freeing us to divert our energies at the San Hospital to saving the lives of those other patients who the new technology now easily identifies do have cardiac disease."

Dr Sebastian Heintze is a radiologist and head of CT and MRI at San Radiology, a service provided by the Sydney Adventist Hospital.

“As a radiologist I need the most detailed images of a patient’s organs to make fast and accurate diagnoses. Existing older generation CT scanners had certain limitations, particularly in the field of heart imaging. With our new Dual Source CT we are now able to capture motion free pictures of the heart at any heart rate without having to medically slow a patient’s heart beat with beta blockers for the scan, as was frequently required with older style 64 slice single source technology.

The technology corresponds to having two CT scanners in one. This generates 128 slices in one rotation, obtaining exquisite images of the heart and blood vessels with only half the dose of existing technology.

This translates into me being able to provide my clinical colleagues with a highly accurate, non-invasive tool for the investigation of cardiovascular disease instead of or before embarking upon more invasive techniques such as catheter angiography.”

Dr Ross Walker is a consultant cardiologist and author of several books on cardiac disease.

“A machine offering 128 slices now enables us to not only quantitatively view the first phase of atherosclerosis ie plaque growth by utilising calcium scoring and assessment of non calcific plaque but now the second phase – plaque rupture (which before was only possible using the well established technique of invasive coronary angiography) through the use of intravenous CT coronary angiography with the exciting addition of 3D imaging. I see this new 128 slice CT scanner as a truly one stop shop for cardiology”.

Patients are equally impressed. 63 year old Bruce Hayman had a coronary CT scan on the new Dual Source CT Scanner at San Radiology at the Sydney Adventist Hospital two weeks ago.

“When you have cardiac disease the uncertainty of not knowing what’s happening means you never have complete peace of mind. This new technology gives me the amazing ability with the help of my doctors to look inside me and know what’s going on – the quadruple bypass that I had 13 years ago does not reverse the cardiac disease I have or prevent further deterioration. This technology enables me to manage my disease – by knowing what’s happening inside I can act preventatively to minimise my risk of heart attack and maximise my chances of living a long life.” Media release ends

The official launch will be on Wednesday 15th November at 11am by Federal Minister for Health and Ageing the Hon Tony Abbott MP. Dr Sebastian Heintze, Dr Peter Illes and Dr Ross Walker and patients will talk at the launch. Tours will be conducted of the facility.

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(See also www.siemens.com - dual source ct scanner)

Sydney Adventist Hospital known as ‘the San’, is NSW’s largest single campus non for profit private hospital caring for approximately 40,000 in-patients and 170,000 out-patients annually.