Rural population is better served by updated ultrasound

Hornsea Cottage Hospital has acquired a Toshiba Aplio 300 ultrasound system. Investment in community-based NHS care in the East Riding of Yorkshire has seen the redevelopment of the hospital, located in a small seaside town around 30 miles from Kingston upon Hull, with the nearest major health centre 35 miles away.

Sonographers for the service are drawn from the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust and sonographer Gill Allinson said: "Providing ultrasound services closer to patient's homes is ideal for our patient group and it is important for us to have an EXACTPrime machine to use for often complex examinations.

The Aplio series is Toshiba's premium system for general imaging and comes with advanced imaging and productivity features. "Image quality and machine reliability are essential for a satellite service such as this, and the choice was an easy one to make," added Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust ultrasound specialist manager Pamela Parker.

The service was previously run from a local GP practice using a Toshiba Varioo, which is a reliable portable machine. However, the opportunity to purchase a main frame system with an improved range of functions has enabled the community service to expand in response to any qualified provider contracts.

Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust ultrasound specialist manager Pamela Parker with sonographer Gill Allinson.

Sentinel node surgery tool is available in the UK

Lymph node status is among the most important prognostic indicators for the clinical outcome of patients with solid cancer, and correct staging is often key to ensuring patients get the right treatment at the right time. According to Imaging Equipment Limited, UK distributor of the Sentinella radio-guided surgery, recent developments in the sentinel node concept and new technology have resulted in the technique being used in a growing number and variety of tumours, in order to determine if the cancer has spread to regional lymph nodes and to aid effective treatment.

The Sentinella is a comprehensive tool for real-time intraoperative or office-based diagnosis. Sentinella incorporates a gamma camera probe, a gamma camera, pointers and diagnostic support software. Its key features include real-time vision of tumours and related lymph nodes, high resolution images that can be saved and compared, enhanced multiple localisation options for pinpointing difficult lesions and a complete surgical suite with innovative tools.

A mini-gamma camera acts as a 'super probe' that is said to be at least 75 per cent more sensitive than best-in-class existing probes.

The Sentinella is manufactured by Oncovision that develops and markets molecular imaging systems based on proprietary technologies for cancer diagnosis and treatment as well as advanced research in neurology, oncology and cardiology.

Asset finance can help UK healthcare system meet cost of replacing medical equipment

Due to legislative reform, demographic changes and rising prosperity, demand for healthcare services is rising across the world, fuelling the requirement for up-to-date medical equipment, points out Siemens Financial Services (SFS). The report says that is exerting considerable financial strain on European healthcare systems.

According to latest research from SFS, UK healthcare organisations will have to invest around £29bn between 2013 and 2018 to replace out of date diagnostic imaging equipment (defined as equipment over 10 years old) alone.

Healthcare organisations need to find ways of accessing efficient and available finance to fund medical equipment upgrades and renewals.

SFS UK general manager David Martin said: "At a time of acute budgetary pressure, equipment replacement can often be made affordable through the use of asset finance techniques such as leasing and renting.

"Asset finance allows healthcare organisations to spread the cost of equipment over its useful lifetime. Such financing arrangements often cover not only the equipment acquisition cost, but also maintenance, service and sometimes consumables."

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Varian's TrueBeam

Lebanese nasal cancer patient is reassured by progress of VMAT

Lebanese’s first Varian TrueBeam medical linear accelerator was used to treat a 24-year-old man with sino-nasal cancer, at the Hotel-Dieu de France Hospital (HDF) of the University of St Joseph in Beirut.

The patient received RapidArc VMAT to help spare the parotid glands from exposure during treatment. "We were able to deliver his treatment in just two continuous arcs of the machine rather than having to stop and start the machine to deliver the treatment beam from different angles," said professor and chairman of HDF Dr Elie Naccache. The intended imaging enabled us to carefully align the patient every day and showed us the progress as we saw the tumour shrinking over the course of treatment. By sharing this information with the patient we are able to reassure him and increase his commitment to the treatment."

Since that first treatment, a further 75 patients have been treated using the TrueBeam system, almost all of them using the RapidArc delivery system. Most of these patients have needed treatment for prostate or head and neck cancer, although doctors at HDF have also commenced breast cancer treatments using respiratory gating, where the beam automatically switches on and off in tandem with the patient's breathing cycle.

The department has also introduced a programme of advanced stereotactic radiotherapy treatments for cranial conditions such as acoustic neuromas, brain metastasis and cavernous sinus meningiomas.

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