

**21 June 2011****Communications Department**

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**Press Release****Setting new standards for cardio vascular imaging**

Patients at the RUH are benefiting from the use of cutting edge digital imaging technology to treat cardiovascular conditions.

A new bi-plane x-ray system that takes cardiac anatomy images from two directions - side and front - simultaneously, means that less x-ray dye is used and patients are exposed to a reduced x-ray dose.

The new system, which allows cardiologists to gain superior views of the coronary arteries, is used in one of the hospital's two specialist cardiac catheter laboratories in the cardiac centre, to diagnose and investigate patients with angina and possible coronary heart disease.

As part of a range of cardiac tests patients may be given a special x-ray of the heart, called a coronary angiogram, which produces high quality, real-time images of the heart and arteries. From these results the cardiologists can decide whether the patient needs further intervention in the form of a coronary angioplasty, which helps stretch a narrowing of the artery in the heart, so that blood can flow more freely.

The RUH is one of only a few hospitals in the South West that has the bi-plane x-ray system, which replaces one of the existing systems at the hospital. Consultant Cardiologist Rob Lowe says: "The new bi-plane system has enhanced the angioplasty service we offer at the RUH and has greatly added to the quality of care we are able to offer our patients.

"Being able to see from two 'directions' simultaneously allows us to visualise the heart's arteries in great detail, and is much more efficient, which means the amount of contrast - or dye - that we need to use can be reduced. The previous 'monoplane' machine required two injections of contrast to be given as we could only see in one direction at a time.

"We now have the capacity to perform coronary angioplasty in both of our Cath Labs at once. This has huge benefits for our patients, specifically the availability of state-of-the-art facilities for patients arriving in the emergency department experiencing a heart attack, as well as allowing us to diagnose an increased number of inpatients, and outpatients having planned procedures."

A patient who has recently benefited from this new technology and the expertise of our cardiac team is Ronald Pennell from Hereford. Mr Pennell says: "I have just experienced a miracle of modern medical treatment for a completely unexpected heart attack."

Mr Pennell was walking with his wife to visit a friend in Wells when he suddenly collapsed. A passing motorist drove them to a friend's apartment. Mr Pennell picks up the story: "The feeling of nausea and shortage of breath seemed quickly to pass off and I dismissed the matter as trivial. However, against my wishes an ambulance was called and very quickly a superb paramedic team examined me and forwarded the information on my condition to Dr. Robert Lowe at the Royal United Hospital, Bath. After urgent consultation, angioplasty was decided upon.

"At the hospital a tiny balloon was inserted into the main artery of my heart, then inflated and withdrawn to leave a small tube, or a stent, in place to strengthen the artery.

"Being allowed to view pictures of the procedure before and afterwards has been a privilege. I feel overwhelmed by the skills and dedication of the paramedics and the staff of the RUH, and deeply indebted to them for their professionalism and outstanding care."

The cath lab environment is also enhanced by the use of ambient lighting and ceiling skylights showing images of the sky, which helps patients to relax and provides a distraction whilst they are undergoing a procedure.

**Ends**

### **Notes to Editors**

There will be photo/filming opportunity of the new biplane x-ray system in action on 23 June, between 2.30pm-4pm. Contact the Communications team on 01225 825849 by 2.30pm on Wednesday 22 June if you are interested in attending.