Press Release

Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute and Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre announce new PET imaging research program

Thunder Bay – The Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute and Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) unveiled their new PET/CT imaging program today.

"This leading-edge technology will be a key component of the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute's molecular imaging and advanced diagnostics agenda. Our career and clinical scientists will soon have access to the best PET technology in the world. It's a great start to our molecular imaging research program," says Mr. Keith Jobbitt, Chair of the Board, Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute.

The new PET/CT unit, the 64-Slice Philips Gemini TF, is considered the most advanced technology in PET imaging, using TruFlight technology to achieve "time-of-flight" imaging. TruFlight delivers faster scans, better image quality and the most advanced platform available for demanding molecular imaging applications. The machine will be operated by the research institute and housed at TBRHSC's Regional Cancer Centre, given the majority of patients who will benefit from the research are cancer patients.

Working within the molecular imaging program of the research institute, Career Scientist Dr. Alla Reznik and Founding Scientific Director Dr. John Rowlands will conduct research on how to improve current PET technology and ideally create the scanner of the future. Cancer patients in Northwestern Ontario will soon be offered PET/CT studies in accordance with approved clinical trials and research studies in Ontario.

"PET research is a non-invasive analysis of the efficacy of treatment, whether it's radiation or chemotherapy. It provides a quantitative analysis of the treatment efficacy," says Dr. Rowlands.

"Basically PET/CT research allows us to detect cancer more precisely because we're looking at it on a molecular level. If we're detecting disease more precisely, it will reduce the impact of more invasive procedures like surgery and assist in treatment planning," says Mr. Michael Power, Acting CEO, Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute.

The new research program will cost approximately $4.5 million in upfront capital costs with the operating support provided by provincial and national research grants. The capital funding was provided by FedNor, Ontario Heritage Fund, Philips Healthcare and Cancer Care Ontario.

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What is PET/CT?

PET-CT stands for Positron Emission Tomography - Computerized Tomography. The imaging device combines both imaging tools (PET and CT) so that images acquired from both devices can be taken at the same time, in the same session from the patient and combined into a single image. Because they take different kinds of images, when the images are combined it gives a more detailed view of the activity in the body and therefore treatment and diagnosis can be more precise.

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