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New & Improved Diagnostic Tool for Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital

Patients undergoing diagnosis at Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital's Nuclear Medicine department are getting faster and sometimes life-saving diagnoses thanks to a new high-tech gamma camera.

The images are created by giving the patient a small amount of substance, called a tracer, which is injected into the bloodstream. The gamma camera then detects the tracer inside the body and produces images.

The new camera will halve the time currently taken to examine a patient and will give clinicians more information than ever before. Unlike an X-ray or CT-scan, the gamma camera builds up a picture of the way an organ is functioning, rather than simply what it looks like.

"Nuclear Medicine is a purely functional process that shows us how organs and different parts of the body are working. For example, if we are examining the heart it will show blood flow to the heart to see if there are any blockages," said Dr Marcin Roman, Director of Nuclear Medicine at the hospital.

Nuclear medicine staff will use the camera for many different scans, the most common being bone, heart and lung. Tumours, infection and other disorders can be detected and the camera can also be used to:

- analyse kidney function
- image blood flow and function of the heart
- scan lungs for respiratory and blood-flow problems
- identify abnormal function of the gallbladder
- evaluate bones for fracture, infection, arthritis or tumour
- determine the presence or spread of cancer
- identify bleeding into the bowel
- locate the presence of infection
- measure thyroid function

"There is also new software that will enable us to combine the gamma camera images with CT scan images which means we can more accurately pin-point abnormalities by looking at the body from both a structural and functional point-of-view," Dr Roman continued.

"It's a great piece of equipment. The new camera will significantly improve the quality of imaging so we can better detect disease. It also means that both outpatients and Hornsby Hospital inpatients can receive the highest quality of care locally, without having to travel to a larger facility."

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