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Image-guided Technology Makes Sinus Surgery Safer

An advanced image-guided system acquired by York Central Hospital (YCH) is making sinus surgery safer for patients. The new LandmarX system costs over \$100,000 and is one of only a few available in Canada. The equipment has been used to help approximately 50 patients to date with procedures such as cosmetic, plastic and reconstructive surgery for benign and cancerous tumors of the sinuses.

With the new system, doctors navigate their way through the nasal passage and with pin-point accuracy they are able to locate the exact site for the medical procedure. They use data from CT (computed tomography) scan images to build a 3-dimensional model of the patient's head. The surgeon then electronically matches the model to the patient's anatomy during surgery.

Not only are they able to see their way around, the system acts much like a GPS (global positioning system) in that the surgeon can determine the precise location of the instruments with respect to the patient's body. Through real-time imaging feedback of the patient's internal anatomy, the surgeon is able to zero-in to treat tumors and lesions, drain inflamed sinuses, while avoiding damage to the surrounding tissue or critical areas. Such minimally invasive surgery lowers the risk of complications to the patient and decreases potentially serious complications which can occur from sinus surgery in general.

“This system works especially well for patients who require repeat surgery or those with complex conditions of the sinuses and nasal cavity,” says Dr. Phil Solomon, YCH Division Head of Otolaryngology.

As an Otolaryngologist, Dr. Solomon is skilled in the medical and surgical management and treatment of patients with diseases and disorders of the ear, nose and throat (ENT), and head and neck area, which is his specialty.

Sinuses between the eyes and just below the brain

Prior to the arrival of the new image-guided system, complex revision cases of chronic sinus disease, including patients who have had multiple prior surgeries, additional surgery was considered difficult and risky. The image-guided system allows surgeons to access the frontal and sphenoid sinuses, located between the eyes and just below the brain, with increased accuracy and safety.

The image-guided technology was first developed for neurosurgery but is now used primarily for sinus surgery.

“Advanced imaging technology blended with CT scans and sinus surgery fiber-optic instruments has allowed us to perform sinus surgery safer and more effectively than in the past,” confirms Dr. William Kaul, YCH Otolaryngologist-Head and Neck Surgeon. Dr. Solomon reports that the patients who have undergone sinus surgery with this new technology have all had excellent recovery, with good results.

YCH Otolaryngologists-Head and Neck Surgeons Dr. Krzysztof Conrad, Dr. Kaul, and Dr. Solomon, of the Surgery Program, are all trained to use this state-of-the-art image-guided system and are training University of Toronto residents to master the technology to enable them to do the same in the future.

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