Varian Medical Systems establishes direct operation in South Africa

Varian Medical Systems is establishing a direct sales and service operation in South Africa to better serve the growing cancer population. Varian’s South African entity will be based in Johannesburg.

“It is now time for Varian to get closer to the market and provide direct sales and service support for the growing number of oncology departments in South Africa that provide treatments using our radiotherapy equipment and software,” says Jean-Luc Devleeschauwer, president of Varian’s operations in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. “We have always intended to operate directly in South Africa and we now feel the time is right to do so.”

Varian has historically sold and serviced its technology-leading radiotherapy systems to South African hospitals via a Johannesburg-based distributor, Tecmed systems to South African technology-leading radiotherapy hospitals via a Johannesburg-based distributor, Tecmed, but now intends to sell and service its systems directly. Varian has installed more than 100 radiotherapy systems across Africa over the past 25 years, including 30 in South Africa. The company has also launched its ‘Access to Care’ educational program in the country in cooperation with Groote Schuur Hospital, providing training for radiation oncologists, medical physicists and radiotherapy therapists from across the African continent.

New evidence highlights significant impact of Oncotype DX® test

Genomic Health has unveiled data providing further evidence that the Oncotype DX® breast cancer test accurately predicts outcomes and has important clinical utility in patients whose breast cancer has spread to their lymph nodes.

The test, already widely used for node-negative patients, uncovers the unique footprint of each patient’s tumour and generates a Recurrence Score® which predicts the likelihood that the patient’s cancer will return and therefore the potential benefit of chemotherapy. Findings from 385 patients presented at the 15th St Gallen International Breast Cancer Conference suggest the test changes clinical decisions for 43% of node-positive patients too, reducing the need for chemotherapy.

Steven Shak, chief scientific officer, Genomic Health, said: “These latest presentations clearly highlight the impact of Oncotype DX in reducing chemotherapy usage and driving more cost-effective treatment, as well as its value in providing doctors with confidence that their patients will receive the quality care they deserve.”

FDA clearance for British family developed scalp cooler

A scalp cooling technology that was developed by a British family to reduce hair loss in breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, has been given clearance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The concept behind the Paxman Scalp Cooling System came when the mother of four, Sue Paxman, experienced first-hand the trauma of chemotherapy-induced hair loss. The Company has since been on a personal journey to ensure Sue’s legacy lives on by helping women around the globe minimise hair loss and contribute to their quality of life.

“It is estimated that 8% of patients actually refuse chemotherapy because they do not want to lose their hair,” explains CEO Richard Paxman.

“After experiencing this first hand, we have been determined to change this, and help minimise hair loss in women undergoing chemotherapy, positively contributing to their overall health and recovery.”

The Paxman scalp cooler will be showcased at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) on booth 25137.

For further information:
E: patient@beatingbowlecancer.org
W: www.beatingbowlecancer.org or @bowelcancer
State government of North-Rhine Westphalia grants research funds to Varian

North-Rhine Westphalian minister for the economy Mr Garrelt Duin today awarded Varian Medical Systems Particle Therapy GmbH research funds amounting to about 10 million Euros. The funding will be used for the further development of proton therapy.

Proton therapy provides a highly targeted treatment for cancer patients and offers specific advantages for paediatric patients. This advanced non-invasive therapy helps to reduce side effects.

The funding comes from the European Regional Development Fund (EFRD/EFRE). The investment will be used to make the technology accessible to a larger group of patients around the globe.

NEW Fluorescent Peptide Imaging application of PXi System allows German researchers to easily detect leukaemia associated proteins

Syngene’s PXi multi-application imager is being used by scientists at the prestigious Freie Universität Berlin for the new application of imaging fluorescent peptides on Western blots. The system provides the researchers with a simple, sensitive method to detect cancer-linked transcription factors.

In the Institute for Pharmacy at the Freie Universität Berlin, scientists are using the PXi imaging system for imaging a peptide labelled with 5-carboxyfluorescein to fish out key interacting protein partners to essential transcription factors. This drug discovery research may contribute to finding druggable targets for treating leukaemia and other cancers.

Ee Lin Wong, a PhD student added: “We chose the PXi because the system is compact but more sensitive than film. This saves time as we can detect the proteins we’re looking for without having to keep repeating our fluorescent blots or use extra X-ray film. The software is very fast and downloads images we can save to a USB stick in a format we can easily analyse and transfer into a file at exactly the right specifications for publication. This allows us to submit good quality figures more rapidly to scientific journals and is a great feature.”

For Further Information contact: Jayne Arthur, Syngene T: +44(0) 1223 727123 E: jayne.arthur@syngene.com or visit: www.syngene.com/pxi-pxi-touch

Taking the strain out of cancer diagnostics

Rainin electronic pipettes are helping California-based Clariant Diagnostic Services, Inc. to provide cancer diagnostic testing. Flow cytometry supervisor Brian Ngo explained: “Our laboratory uses flow cytometry to detect specific biomarkers that help to diagnose leukaemia, and this involves pipetting microliter volumes of antibodies and samples. When you are doing a lot of pipetting, user comfort is very important and so we decided to invest in electronic pipettes.”

“We looked at the various options available, and chose Rainin E4 XLS single channel pipettes because they are ergonomically designed and very easy to hold. They are also quite intuitive to use with the benefit of a large LCD screen. There are advantages from a GLP perspective too, as the programmed volume ranges can be password protected and particular features locked down or hidden. The pipettes are very dependable and, as they can operate accurately over a range of volumes we have been able to reduce the number of pipettes in the lab from over 100 to about 10, significantly decreasing our calibration costs.”

For more information contact: Mettler Toledo Rainin T +1 800 472-4646 W: www.mt.com/rainin @MettlerToledoPR

Royal Surrey introduces rectal sparing hydrogel

St Luke’s Cancer Centre, part of the Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, has transformed the way it delivers prostate brachytherapy with the use of SpaceOAR® from Oncology Systems Limited. The hydrogel, placed between the prostate and rectum, has enabled the Cancer Centre to provide prostate brachytherapy to patients with cases that would usually have been considered a contraindication or those who have previously received external beam radiotherapy (EBRT). With the use of SpaceOAR, the Centre can minimise the risk of radiation to the rectum, enabling it to offer life-changing brachytherapy treatment to a greater number of men.

SpaceOAR hydrogel is injected as a liquid between the prostate and rectum under ultrasound guidance. Insertion takes just a few minutes and negates the need for additional operations and general anaesthetic. Once injected, the liquid solidifies into a hydrogel that creates a temporary space between the prostate and rectum. The intent is to position the anterior rectal wall away from the prostate during radiotherapy and reduce the radiation dose delivered to the anterior rectum. The hydrogel maintains space for about three months and then liquefies, allowing it to be naturally absorbed by the body in about six months.

Professor Stephen Langley, Clinical Director for Urology at St Luke’s Cancer Centre comments, “SpaceOAR acts as a natural extension to our existing brachytherapy treatment and in future, it would be hard to not justify using it.”

For further information visit www.osl.uk.com or T: +44 (0)1743 462694 E: enquiry@osl.uk.com @OSL1

State Minister Garrelt Duin (2nd from right) with employees of Varian Particle Therapy in Troisdorf, Germany. “This is a good day for North Rhine-Westphalia.” states minister Duin during his visit to Varian in Troisdorf, Germany. “In addition to significantly improving the treatment options for tumours, this funding is a great opportunity for cooperation between science and industry in the high-tech location of North-Rhine Westphalia. Varian will help equip the global health market from here.” “Through these research and development projects we will cooperate with universities, colleges and partner companies. Using the concept of ‘Open-Innovation’ we thus want to lay the foundations for the development of ground-breaking technologies and contribute to the improvement of patient care,” emphasizes Dr Wolfgang Kaissl, managing director of Varian Particle Therapy in Germany.

For more information visit www.varian.com and @VarianMedSys
Unveiled on show floor, Halcyon simplifies and enhances image-guided volumetric IMRT

In front of a large crowd at the annual meeting of the European Society for Radiotherapy & Oncology (ESTRO 36) on May 6th, Varian Medical Systems unveiled the Halcyon™ system, an entirely new device for cancer treatment. The audience at the unveiling were among the first in the world to see this new system which simplifies and enhances virtually every aspect of image-guided volumetric intensity modulated radiotherapy (IMRT).

“The reception Halcyon received at the unveiling, and from attendees coming to the booth has been tremendous,” said Kolleen Kennedy, president of Varian’s Oncology Systems business. “People have been impressed in the simplicity of the design and how we have automated the system to make it easy for therapists, physicists and physicians to deliver high quality treatments around the world.”

“I was pleased to be present at the ESTRO unveiling of Varian’s new treatment system,” said Professor Gabriela Studer, head of radiotherapy at Kantonsspital in Lucerne, Switzerland. “There seems to be a great deal of interest in the Halcyon system, which we believe could add to the speed and efficiency of advanced, image-guided treatments.”

For more information on Halcyon visit www.varian.com/halcyon

Blue Faery Grants Liver Cancer Research Award to Dr Amit Singal

Primary liver cancer, also known as Hepatocellular Carcinoma (HCC), is the second leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide. Blue Faery created the award to recognize medical professionals who develop innovative research in the fight against HCC, which has no cure.

This year’s recipient of the Blue Faery Award (BFA) is Dr Amit Singal who states, “I am truly honoured to receive the Blue Faery Award for Excellence in Liver Cancer Research, and it is a privilege to be among the leaders in the HCC field who previously won the award. I have strived to improve HCC early detection and prognosis through my research, and this award helps reinforce the importance of these goals. I look forward to continue working with your group on improving outcomes for patients at-risk and/or with HCC.”

Dr Singal is an expert in Hepatocellular Carcinoma, particularly in early tumour detection and screening process failures. He serves as Clinical Chief of Hepatology and Medical Director of the Liver Tumor Program at UT Southwestern Medical Center. Dr Singal is leading several federal and state-funded projects to evaluate interventions to improve the effectiveness of early tumour detection efforts among patients with cirrhosis. He has published several book chapters on HCC and over 100 peer-reviewed publications.

Dr Singal will receive $3,300 and a custom Blue Faery plaque to commemorate his achievement.

For further information visit: www.bluefaery.org

@BlueFaeryLiver

Almac Group Announces Publication of Prostate Cancer Metastatic Assay Validation

Almac Group’s Diagnostics business unit today announced the Journal of European Urology has published results relating to its Prostate Cancer Metastatic Assay. The publication demonstrates the assay can be used to analyse primary prostate cancer FFPE samples to identify a molecular subgroup with a high risk of developing distant metastases. The assay therefore has the potential to guide the choice of therapy for patients presenting with primary prostate cancer.

Professor Richard Kennedy, MD, PhD, VP and Medical Director, Almac Diagnostics and McClay Professor in Medical Oncology, Queen’s University Belfast commented “An unbiased discovery approach was used to identify a molecular subtype of primary prostate cancer that demonstrated metastatic biology. This approach has created a very robust assay with excellent performance, independent of clinical factors such as Gleason and CAPRA. We believe it will play a significant role in aiding clinicians to select the most appropriate therapy regimen for their patients.”

The study was conducted in conjunction with The Movember / Prostate Cancer UK funded Prostate Cancer Centre of Excellence at Queen’s University of Belfast and Manchester University along with Cardiff University, University College Dublin, Oslo University and the University of Surrey. Independent assay validation was performed using 322 radical prostatectomy samples with Metastatic Assay positive patients having increased risk of biochemical recurrence (Multivariable HR 1.62; p= 0.0092) and metastatic recurrence (Multivariable HR=3.20; p=0.0001). A combined model with CAPRA-S identified patients at increased risk of biochemical and metastatic recurrence superior to either model alone (HR=2.67; p=0.0001 and HR=7.53; p<0.0001) respectively.

For further information:
T: +44 (0)2838 332200
@AlmacGroup W: almacgroup.com