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Tiny heart monitors bring big benefits for patients

Miniaturised cardiac monitors are being implanted in patients at South Tyneside District Hospital.

The monitors, which are about one-third the size of an AAA battery, are nearly 90% smaller than conventional, implantable devices. They are used for assessing patients with symptoms of dizziness, blackouts or palpitations, which could be signs of disturbances in heart rhythm that may require treatment. For patients at high risk of having heart problems, the device also has the benefit of offering remote monitoring, allowing for any potential abnormalities to be detected immediately by automatically transmitting information wirelessly to the cardiology team.

Consultant Cardiologist Dr Mickey Jachuck said: "Whilst many of the causes for common symptoms are benign, it is important to establish the reason behind them. This is often difficult as the symptoms can occur infrequently and are unpredictable so the ability to monitor the heart continuously, for anything up to two to three years, is extremely helpful in terms of making a diagnosis or reassuring the patient that their heart rhythm is normal."

South Shields father-of-four Gary Koomson was among the first patients to have the new monitor implanted at South Tyneside. Mr Koomson, who has a form of the heart muscle disease cardiomyopathy, said: "I think it's great: the procedure to implant it was painless and it only took about 10 minutes. It gives me peace of mind because I know that if there any heart irregularities, the doctors will automatically know about it."

Previously, implantation of cardiac monitoring devices at South Tyneside District Hospital required a minor surgical procedure, performed in an operating theatre, with antibiotics given intravenously beforehand and the wound, measuring 2cm-3cm, closed with stitches. The new Medtronic monitors are implanted in the chest, just under the skin, using local anaesthetic. The very simple procedure takes only a few minutes and the incision measures less than 1cm. No antibiotics are needed and only a sterile dressing is required to cover the wound.

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Notes to Editors

The Medtronic Reveal LINQ Insertable Cardiac Monitor system is designed to help physicians quickly and accurately diagnose irregular heartbeats. Medtronic plc (www.medtronic.com), headquartered in Dublin, Ireland, is a global leader in medical technology

Pictured above: Consultant Cardiologist Dr Mickey Jachuck, holding the old-style implant, and patient Gary Koomson, with the new one which he has had implanted

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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