

MEDICAL BRIEFS

New breast biopsy device less invasive

STORY BY KURT KUBAN — PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM HAWLEY

Pituitary support

A Pituitary Disorders Education and Support meeting scheduled from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 9 featuring guest speaker Dr. Nasir Haque, Haque is board certified in both Pediatric Endocrinology and Internal Medicine. He completed his endocrine training at Hospital for Sick Children, in London England, and Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. He specializes on endocrine and metabolic disorders. Furthermore, he has experience treating GH Deficiency in both pediatric and adult patients. He is affiliated with St. Joseph Pontiac and Oakwood Hospitals. Dr. Haque is developing a "Center of Excellence" focused on the health and well being of adult hypopituitary patients. To clarify hypopituitary is deficient in one or more hormones. The location is Brighton District Library, 200 Charles Orndorf Drive, Brighton MI, 48116. Call (810) 229-6571.

Amputee group

Amputee and Disability Group, a group open to those dealing with amputation or physical disability, their family and friends. The group promotes travel, recreation, social get togethers and health issues and serves Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties. Meeting will be held at 6 p.m. the 3rd Wednesday (March 15) of the month at Creative Controls. They are located at 1470 Suter, Troy, MI (Souter in located south of 15 Mile, between Rochester and Stephenson Highway). For more information call Mary Ann at (810) 415-5581 or email at map571@aol.com or visit <http://hometown.aol.com/map571/fmyhomepage/index.html>



The Oakwood Healthcare System's Breast Care Center in Dearborn recently became the first healthcare provider in the state of Michigan to utilize a breakthrough device in the fight against breast cancer.

This week, the center began using the Mammotome Hand Held Breast Biopsy System, an ultrasound-guided system that is much less invasive and more effective than previous methods of biopsy. For many women who have had an initial detection of an abnormality in their breast, this new equipment will mean a simple, painless biopsy procedure with little lasting effects.

The equipment can also be used on women who feel abnormalities in their breast, but due to dense breast tissue, they do not show up on a mammogram. Traditionally, these women would have had only one choice: having their breast surgically cut open, so a large amount of tissue could be extracted for further tests.

The new system, known as stereotactic biopsy, consists of a needle that is inserted into the breast. This needle extracts a tissue sample for further analysis.

Stereotactic biopsy has been in use for about three years, but the new Mammotome Hand Held Breast Biopsy System uses an ultrasound probe inserted on the head of the needle, which allows doctors the ability to pinpoint the areas that are affected with abnormalities, such as nodules or calcifications.

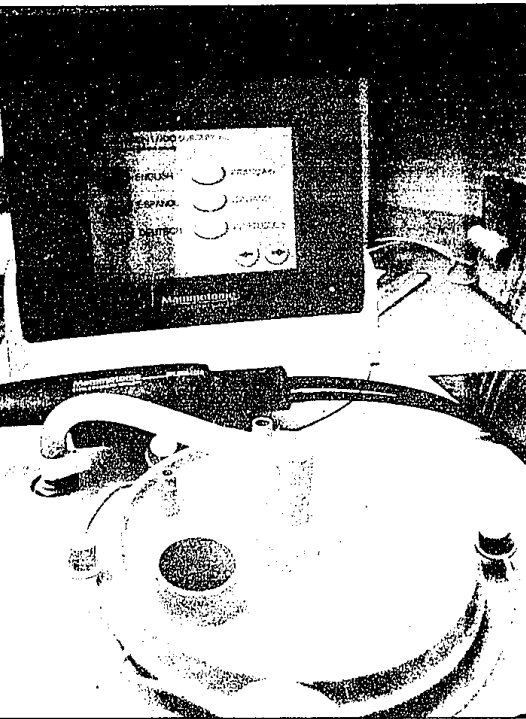
"When using this instrument, there is never a point during the biopsy that we are not imaging at the same time, which means we know exactly where we are," said Sharon Helmer, a physician at the center.

In addition to the ultrasound feature, the new Mammotome device offers several advantages over previous methods, including the ability to take much larger tissue samples, which allows pathologists to make a more accurate diagnosis.

It also allows the patient a far more comfortable experience. Only local anesthetic is used, and the entire procedure takes about an hour, and sometimes as little as 20 minutes.

"It's a very comfortable procedure for the patient. Most women are able to leave and go to work, and don't even have to take Tylenol afterwards," Helmer said.

There are other advantages as well. Because of the better tissue samples, pathological results can be ascertained much quicker, meaning women have a shorter waiting period before they find out if the abnormality in their breast is cancerous. In the past, women typically had to wait up to a week before getting test results. They will now get them in about two days.



Technology: The new Hand Held Mammotome Breast Biopsy System is less invasive, does not require an incision and provides faster results to the patient.

Helmer believes this shorter period can mean a great deal to a patient. "Of course, like any human being, most women think the worst when going in for a procedure like this. It is very agonizing to wonder whether or not you have cancer. This new device just speeds up the whole process," she said.

The funding for the new Mammotome equipment was provided by the Kelly Sorini Women's Healthcare Classic (WHC), an annual golf benefit that began in 1993. Each year the proceeds from the

outing are used to aid various Oakwood programs and equipment related to the area of women's health. After last year's event, a committee decided to use a large amount of the proceeds to purchase two of the new devices.

"This procedure will definitely help women not be quite so afraid. When you say the word biopsy, a lot of women immediately think about being cut open. This is a much easier way to do the very same thing without the invasiveness of the surgery," said Jan Fitzgerald, founder and general chair of the WHC. "We see it as a wonderful tool to improve the status of women's health in our community."

The 2000 WHC will be held June 19 at the Grosse Ile Golf and Country Club. Helmer is also excited about the implementation of the new system. "This is a wonderful advance for women. It's just a much better procedure than we have used in the past," she said.



Trailblazers: Breast Care Center in Dearborn office manager Sandra Ziaja (left) and Dr. Sharon Helmer stand in an exam room with the new Mammotome system.

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