

PRESS INFORMATION

Olympus Medical Systems Europa GmbH

Active support for colorectal cancer prevention and treatment

Brussels, 9 May 2007 – Colorectal cancer is the second major cause of cancer related deaths in Europe. Scientific studies show that screening programmes for colorectal cancer can significantly reduce mortality. Nevertheless, one of the most crucial factors in the assessment of screening is the number of people actually participating in such a programme. The higher this compliance, the higher the medical benefit for the population and the more cost-effective it is for the healthcare provider. Public awareness is therefore an important key to success. Olympus is one of the leading medical service providers in the field of endoscopy and strongly promotes the early detection of colorectal cancer. Among its activities to achieve this objective is the committed support of organisations such as the Felix Burda Foundation which carries out important work to inform about and raise awareness of colorectal cancer and thereby help to save lives.

Raising colorectal cancer awareness

Creating awareness of colorectal cancer and informing of the possibilities available to prevent this disease is seen by Olympus as one of its duties. As well as initiating awareness programmes for its employees, Olympus actively supports the work of external bodies such as, for example, the Felix Burda Foundation to help in their work to promote early detection and successful treatment of colorectal cancer.

What many don't know is that with early diagnosis, the vast majority of cases of colorectal cancer can be prevented or cured. If the disease is detected in time the chance of recovery is almost 100%. However, colonoscopy is often assumed to be an unpleasant examination. Therefore, many people don't take advantage of the great opportunities that preventive colorectal examinations offer. However, due to latest technologies, colonoscopy is nowadays very gentle, safe and painless.

Olympus offers many innovative solutions for the prevention and treatment of colorectal cancer. Among the most important breakthroughs of recent times has been the application of HDTV technology – which in combination with Narrow Band Imaging allows for earlier and more accurate cancer detection than ever before.

HDTV platform for endoscopy and minimally invasive surgery

Only a little more than a year after the market launch of the Olympus EVIS EXERA II universal video platform – more than 1,500 hospitals in Europe alone can use the Olympus technology in endoscopy and in minimally invasive surgery. The equipment is used primarily in the areas of gastroenterology and in surgery.

Currently, Olympus is the only supplier worldwide to have the EVIS EXERA II series HDTV 1080i platform for flexible endoscopy and surgical endoscopy on the market and is achieving sales accordingly. The crucial benefits of EVIS EXERA II for doctors working in endoscopy are the markedly improved image quality, which enables a detailed view of surface structures and gives more precise information about the symptoms and diagnosis. Thus hospitals can work more efficiently and more cost effectively, as follow-up examinations to confirm diagnoses can potentially be reduced. Moreover, they offer increased patient safety, as minimally invasive operations using HDTV prevent damage to nerves and healthy tissue.

Early diagnosis of colorectal cancer especially important

HDTV technology also makes it easier to diagnose minor tissue changes at an early stage. Particularly esophageal and colorectal cancers have good treatment and cure rates when the illness is diagnosed early. According to WHO figures, almost one million people worldwide currently develop colorectal cancer every year. Research from the United States proves that the mortality rate could be reduced to 35 percent through consistent diagnosis and early treatment (Source: Lebensblicke Foundation, which promotes early diagnosis of colorectal cancer). Particularly for cancer risk patients, a preventive check-up using the latest technology improves the chances of detecting and removing malignant changes (lesions) while they are still only a few millimetres in size.

HDTV boasts four times as many pixels as standard television

HDTV generates high-definition images which are not comparable to the transmission technology used in endoscopy up to now. A completely HDTV-compatible video chain is a prerequisite for brilliant image reproduction. EVIS EXERA II is the first video platform that enables the HDTV 1080i standard in all areas of endoscopic imaging. With 1,080 effective, horizontal scanning lines, HDTV contains four times as many pixels per image as the conventional NTSC (480) and PAL (567) television systems. The increased pixel density results in a clear, regular picture whose remarkable detail and natural colour reproduction are not marred by grainy resolution that occurs with lower resolution. This outstanding quality and the life-like pictures make HDTV ideal for demanding imaging procedures like endoscopy. Experts describe these vivid images as the "3-D effect" of HDTV.

Narrow Band Imaging improves contrasts

In conjunction with the NBI (Narrow Band Imaging) technology developed by Olympus, the surface structures of tissues which were until now

obscured can now also be made more visible. A quick technical summary: NBI technology uses blue and green colours to achieve the image intensification. Narrowband light that NBI uses does not reach lower layers of tissue and is absorbed well by the blood vessels. As a result, the areas with light reflection (mucous membrane) and the areas with no reflection (blood vessel) can be distinguished from one another and displayed with higher contrast. This enables malignant changes to be diagnosed even earlier. Up to now, these sunken lesions, which are sometimes flat, could only be visualised using specific colour techniques, so-called chromoendoscopy. Using NBI technology, this time-consuming and costly procedure will no longer be necessary in future, because NBI can be switched on at the touch of a button and used any time diagnostic results are unclear.

Prominent live demonstrations of HDTV in Germany

There has been extremely positive feedback from doctors on the combined HDTV and NBI technology. EVIS EXERA II is used in leading European hospitals, including Berlin, Hamburg, Dusseldorf, Amsterdam, Brussels, Lyon, Nice, Rome and Barcelona. Scientific studies are also carried out at these medical centres to document the success of this technology for both doctor and patient.

Meanwhile, live demonstrations of HDTV are also becoming very popular. At the end of September 2006 at the EAES Congress in Berlin as well as in early November 2006, several demonstrations were held at prominent medical conferences and congresses. At the Endo Club Nord 2006, a globally established congress for live endoscopy in Hamburg, HDTV pictures were transmitted to the Congress Center Hamburg (CCH) from the three endoscopy centres in Hamburg, the UK Eppendorf (UKE) as well as the Asklepios clinics in Altona and Barmbek. In addition, there was a live broadcast from the UKE during the annual conference of the Minimal Invasive Surgery Working Group (CAM). The first HDTV live transmission

via satellite from Europe to the US was carried out from the “Evangelisches Krankenhaus” hospital in Cologne to the American Association of Gynaecological Laparoscopy (AAGL) in Las Vegas on 10 November 2006.

Perfect integration with ENDOBASE

Olympus has developed the concept of “Endoscopy Systems Integration” (ESI) to improve processes and enhance the working environment in endoscopy departments. The core of ESI is the ENDOBASE software, which ensures faster and better communication. Thanks to proven HL7 and DICOM interfaces, it allows for the complete integration into existing hospital IT landscapes. ENDOBASE supports and interfaces all areas of a modern endoscopy department, no matter if before, during and after an examination. Featuring a user-friendly interface and easy to use applications, it enhances and streamlines processes so that nursing staff, doctors, health administrators and patients alike all benefit. Furthermore, ENDOBASE assures a secure investment as future research and development within Olympus will take the ESI concept into account.

World market for medical technology continues to grow

The world market for medical technology is still in a positive environment. In 2005, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research published a “Survey on the Situation of Medical Technology in Germany in an International Comparison.” Based on general economic development and the 17 most important economies surveyed, it forecasts that the health market will continue to grow and that medical technology’s share within this market will continue to increase. Manufacturers of diagnostic equipment and the out-patient surgery area will profit above-average from this development, according to the survey. Despite the general cost-cutting pressure in the health system, hospitals will remain the largest customers for medical technology products. Based on these results and Olympus Medical Systems Europe’s own calculations, the company expects that demand for endoscopy products will continue to rise.

Olympus Medical Systems: Market leader in flexible endoscopes

In the fiscal year 2006, the Olympus Corporation achieved a turnover of 978,127 billion YEN with 33,000 employees. With its turnover of €1.569 billion, Olympus Europe is the second-largest group company after Japan and employs 4,800 staff. The Olympus Medical Systems Europe company division alone achieved a turnover of €512 million in 2005/2006 financial year.

With a market share of around 70 percent, Olympus Medical Systems is the leading manufacturer of flexible endoscopes worldwide. In the rigid endoscope segment, Olympus Medical has a market share of around 15 percent. The central research laboratories and production plants for flexible endoscopes are located in Japan and for rigid endoscopes in Hamburg, Germany.

Olympus Group owns more than 10,000 patents

Olympus is one of the world's leading manufacturers of opto-digital products for professional and leisure use as well as for medical, scientific and industrial applications. The parent company was founded in 1919 in Japan and initially focused primarily on the development and production of microscopes. In 1936, Olympus launched its first camera onto the market and in 1950 the company presented its first gastro-camera for medical examinations. Since then, Olympus has developed a significant foothold in the market for medical technology such that it now forms a pillar of the company's business. Currently, the Olympus Group owns more than 10,000 patents, of which the largest share is in the area of Medical Systems with 3,721 patents.

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