

# NEW TREATMENT METHOD AT DACHAU HOSPITAL / NEW THERAPY FOR MYOMA GERMANY

Dachauer Kurier, 06/10/2008



“This is a new surgical concept, bound to change the world,“ says Dr. Rabinovici who specially came from Israel to attend the inauguration of Dachau Hospital's newest acquisition: an MR-guided Focused Ultrasound device (MRgFUS), enabling clinicians to treat uterine fibroids. Dachau Hospital is the first clinic in southern Germany offering this procedure.

Dr. Gerlinde Debus, head of the OB/GYN department, explained that uterine fibroids are the most common benign tumors in women of child-bearing age. Fibroids can cause bleeding, pain and infertility. There is a high demand for treatment options where the uterus remains intact.

During the treatment, the patient lies on her stomach on a gel cushion that is integrated into a special examination table linked to the MRT. Painless, sonic waves are then targeted directly at the fibroid under computer-assisted control. Each stage of the procedure is constantly monitored using MRT images. The ultrasonic waves are focused with MRgFUS inside the body so that heat is generated at the focal point. After a few seconds of energy radiation, temperatures of between 60 and 80 °C are reached so that the tissue at the focal point dies, while adjoining areas of tissue remain unharmed.

The treatment takes between two and three hours, depending on the size of the fibroid, and patients can generally be discharged from hospital the same day after a period of recovery and monitoring.

Matthias Matzko, head of the radiology department, compares this procedure to “being able to remove the pips from an apple without having to cut it open.” The method involves the combination of high-energy ultrasound (treatment) and MRT (planning and monitoring) that allows growths and tumors to be melted away non-invasively and completely bloodlessly.

Bernd von Polheim, President of GE Healthcare Germany highlights the further advantages that this method of treatment offers for women with fibroids: "The combination of focused sonic therapy and MRT gives us much greater target precision and real-time effectiveness monitoring. The method is non-invasive and thus replaces surgery. No anesthetic is required, the patient is exposed to no radiation and the MRT monitoring ensures maximum safety."

Von Polheim underlined the fact that a new treatment methods take 15-17 years to be widely accepted. Therefore it is of vital importance that investments have to be made first of all into improving technology.

According to Dr. Dov Maor, Vice President Clinical Marketing, International Academic Sites, the method is not yet available for treating malign tumors. The method however offers tremendous opportunities, particularly in the field of oncology, and has demonstrated promising initial results in the treatment of breast cancer, the palliative treatment of bone metastases, prostate cancer and liver metastases.

Up to now the treatment is not covered by healthcare insurance providers, but negotiations are underway.