Medical Device Daily

World Health Care Congress Notebook

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Companies unveil host of new products at gathering

A Medical Device Daily Staff Report

The fifth edition of the World Health Care Congress (WHCC) in Washington brings together more than 2,000 CEOs, senior executives and government officials from the nation's largest employers, hospitals, health systems, health plans, pharmaceutical and biotech companies, and government agencies.

The 2008 edition of the conference, which runs through Wednesday at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, saw a host of new products being unveiled.

InSightec (Tirat Carmel, Israel) is exhibiting its FDA-approved MR-Guided Focused Ultrasound Surgery (MRgFUS) device, the ExAblate 2000.

The device has been used to treat uterine fibroids non-invasively, minimizing trauma, morbidity and recovery time. In addition to enhancing patient care, the company said the procedure has a "significant economic impact," reducing overall medical costs when compared to conventional surgery. Uterine fibroids are a pervasive condition that impacts up to 70% of women of childbearing age and can lead to serious symptoms.

"This technology has been a major advance in women's health and is setting the stage for other non-invasive surgical advances. We believe this non-invasive technology has the potential to become one of the major forms of surgery within the next 20 years, helping improve millions of lives without the long hospitalizations, extended recovery times, side effects, complication risks and extensive costs associated with invasive surgery," said Kobi Vortman, PhD, InSightec's president/CEO.

The MRgFUS procedure takes between two to four hours, depending on the size of the fibroids treated. Patients are able to go home the same day and return to normal activities within a day or two.

In contrast, hysterectomy (removal of the uterus), is the most common treatment for uterine fibroids, and is a major surgery requiring hospitalization and significantly longer recovery times.

"This is an excellent example of an advanced technology which, instead of adding to the healthcare costs, can significantly reduce it in those patients that qualify for this non

invasive treatment," said Victor Reddick, InSightec's senior VP and GM. "With this procedure, payers, employers, hospitals and patients are all spared the multidimensional costs of conventional uterine surgery."

InSightec is carrying out an extensive research program to conduct clinical trials using this technology in various cancerous applications including breast, bone metastases, liver, brain and prostate, while continuing clinical trials in uterine fibroids.

In other news from WHCC: Intel (Santa Clara, California) introduced its SOA Expressway for Healthcare, software that it said provides "an efficient way to exchange healthcare information inside hospitals and with health information networks."

The company said the product will allow healthcare providers to more easily connect with one another so that each can provide better care while benefiting from reduced integration costs.

Until now, Intel said the sharing of patient information among healthcare network participants has been hindered by the steep costs and complexities of data and integration services.

Based on service oriented architecture (SOA), Intel SOA Expressway for Healthcare is designed to offer a cost-efficient solution to this problem, Intel said, by providing an "efficient and scaleable way" to translate, process and connect any data format across a healthcare network.

Intel also said it has created a group of validated independent software vendors that provides best-of-breed capabilities to deploy a complete health network powered by the Intel SOA Expressway. "Intel has developed the SOA Expressway for Healthcare as a platform that can be used with a wide variety of existing IT environments to provide world-class integration regardless of the specific electronic medical records and other software platforms used at individual healthcare facilities," said Renee James, VP/GM of Intel's software and solutions group.