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Leading U.S. Cancer Clinic Installs First Optical Noise Cancelling Communication System for Interventional MRI

Fiber optics-based system enables team of doctors to converse normally while performing medical procedures, even in noisy MRI environment

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL (13 July 2009) – Optoacoustics announced that The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center (MDACC) has installed the leading-edge IMROC™ communication system for use in its clinical Interventional MRI Suite, one of the most advanced facilities of its type in the world.

Optoacoustics' Interventional MR Optical Communication System (IMROC) is the only system that enables doctors in interventional MRI (iMRI) environments to work smoothly and quietly during procedures, speaking freely with both technicians and patients. Designed for today's advanced MRI suites, IMROC **supports up to eight concurrent dialogs, eliminating MRI acoustic gradient noise and providing previously unheard voice quality.**

"We're very proud of this installation at one of the world's most respected research and clinical hospitals," said Yuvi Kahana, CEO of Optoacoustics. "IMROC is the product of intensive development in partnership with MDACC and other advanced MRI facilities around the world. It introduces a number of **pioneering technologies that together for the first time solve the problem of MRI communications.** We believe that IMROC will help bring tremendous progress in the development of iMRI clinical procedures."

Kamran Ahrar, M.D., lead interventional radiologist at MDACC and a principal user of the IMROC system, agreed that adding real-time communications during the MRI scan is an important step forward. "Using the communication system has improved our efficiency," Ahrar said. "**We're able to schedule and perform a larger number of interventions in our MRI suite since the installation of the IMROC.** We've used this communication system in 100 percent of the cases performed using interventional MRI."

The IMROC system comprises Optoacoustics' industry-leading FOMRI™ highly directional fiber optical microphone integrated with new, patented fiber optical headphones, an optics-based switching unit worn by staff members in the scanner room, and a six-channel mixing and control console that resides in the MRI control room. IMROC is completely EMI/RFI immune and has been proven safe for MRI environments.

The IMROC system combines multi-disciplinary breakthroughs such as optoacoustic MEMS transducers developed specifically for high-field MRI environments, together with state-of-the-art digital signal processing. IMROC provides multi-channel adaptive noise reduction and echo cancellation to bring hands-free, full duplex communications between MRI scanner and control rooms.

M. D. Anderson's pioneering iMRI activities currently focus on MR guided biopsies and ablations for soft tissue and for the head, neck, bone, liver and kidney. For biopsies, the MDACC staff has begun using two IMROC headsets (radiologist and control room technologist); for ablations, up to three headsets (radiologist, staff and technologist); for combined MR and fluoroscopy procedures, as many as five IMROC staff headsets are used.

The unprecedented high quality of IMROC communications has dramatically changed the methods used at MDACC, making procedures smoother and safer.

"Before, if the technologist needed to prescribe a technically complex scan or call cytology, it was easier to leave the suite and go back to the control room. Now that we have IMROC, the technologist remains in the control room and is able to respond much more quickly to the needs of the radiologist during a procedure," explains Jason Stafford, Ph.D., an MDACC imaging physics specialist.

In recent years, the dramatic growth of image-guided medical therapies has brought with it the development of interventional MRI, which is now considered among the leading platforms for detection and treatment of cancers. However, the development of effective clinical procedures has been challenging, in part due to the noisy and impersonal MRI environment, which prevents direct communications. With the arrival of the IMROC system, doctors, staff and patients can – for the first time – talk simply and directly during all stages of an MRI procedure.

Optoacoustics' IMROC system is currently being installed at three additional leading U.S. iMRI facilities.

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Optoacoustics is a leading provider of optical fiber-based microphones, sensors and systems worldwide, providing a broad range of robust, high performance, inherently safe, EMI/RFI immune solutions to medical, industrial equipment, power generation, research, government and other sectors. Optoacoustics' technology is protected by over 20 international patents. For more information, visit <http://www.optoacoustics.com/>.