

# Offering **suite success** for heart patients

Multipurpose Interventional Suite allows cardiologists to pinpoint the area of concern in the patient’s heart to within one millimetre

There have been so many advances in medical technology, Dr. Jorge Bonet says the knowledge and techniques he had coming out of medical school 30 years ago wouldn’t qualify him to practice as a cardiologist today.

“It’s a new job every day,” says Dr. Bonet, the head of cardiology at Royal Columbian Hospital. “It’s a constant intellectual challenge.”

One of the most remarkable and effective pieces of technology his department has acquired in recent years is the Multipurpose Interventional Suite (MPIS), a \$5 million procedural room which was set up in October 2012. This state-of-the-art suite is a one-stop shop that allows doctors to diagnose, pinpoint and correct irregular heart rhythms in addition to providing other highly specialized heart and neurological procedures.

Instead of facing a lifetime regime of expensive drugs that can bring on side effects, patients with atrial fibrillation like Stephen Lesosky are typically able to walk out of the hospital a few hours after the procedure, essentially cured, and with recovery time, able to resume their normal lives.

“I felt like I was constantly living with a black cloud over my head,” says Lesosky, 44, who’d lived with the irregular beat in the top half of his heart for five years.

The condition brought on symptoms of heart palpitations and chest pain, and Lesosky faced a greater risk of suffering a stroke if it was left uncorrected.

Using a sophisticated X-ray machine that is the centerpiece of the suite, doctors are able to integrate its images with those from a CT scan to render a 3D image of a patient’s heart and the sequences of electrical pulses that activate the heartbeat.

With such a complete picture of the heart’s structure and function they can then precisely pinpoint the source of the problem to within one millimetre.

“Most patients with an irregular heartbeat have one or two possible reasons for it,” says Dr. Bonet. “Some rhythms are very challenging; however, new advances in technology have enabled us to identify

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and cure most arrhythmias.”

A catheter is then guided to that point and the fibrillation is corrected by using radio frequency waves.

Working in the high-tech suite surrounded by monitors is almost like being immersed in a video game, says Dr. Bonet, whose medical team includes Drs. John LeMaitre and Stanley Tung.

“If it wasn’t for advances in technology, this wouldn’t have been possible,” says Dr. Bonet. “It has changed our practice tremendously. It gives us

tremendous satisfaction.”

RCH is one of only three hospitals in Metro Vancouver with an MPIS, which can also be used for neurological procedures.

But the other two are in Vancouver, and with the



ABOVE: Royal Columbian Hospital head of Cardiology Dr. Jorge Bonet in the Multipurpose Interventional Suite with Tammy Easton, cardiovascular technician. BELOW: The suite had its official ribbon cutting last fall.



Fraser Health region serving 1.7 million people, Dr. Bonet says his department can barely keep up with demand. His team performs about 290 electrophysiology procedures a year.

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