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Innovation

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Handheld hearts

Sunnybrook's cardiac inpatients may be surprised to learn how "mobile" their hearts are even when they're resting in bed. Nurses and other health-care staff in the Schulich Heart Centre are carrying handheld devices that provide a quick view of cardiac waveforms. "This new technology lets me see heart rhythms right away so I can quickly respond to my patients' needs," says registered nurse Metilda Manuel.

The first-in-Canada technology not only ensures staff are continuously on top of each patient's condition, it also allows them to send messages to each other. The result? The right staff connecting with the right patient, as well as decreased

ambient noise from overhead loud pages. Look for the new technology in the Dr. Brian W. Gilbert CICU and the E & G and P & L Odette Family Cardiac Inpatient Unit.

Botox: It's not just for wrinkles

What does urinary incontinence have to do with a neurotoxin? It's the most unlikely treatment, but Sunnybrook researchers have discovered something that can improve the quality of life for thousands living with urinary incontinence. They're using botulinum toxin A, or Botox, to decrease episodes of incontinence for patients living with this condition due to spinal cord injury or multiple sclerosis.

The first North American study with a one-year follow up found episodes of daily urinary incontinence decreased by up to 57 per cent, with benefits lasting up to nine months. The study was lead by Dr. Sender Herschorn, a urologist at Sunnybrook.

"Many Canadians are living with incontinence, which is debilitating both physically and emotionally," says Dr. Herschorn. "Treatment with botulinum toxin A is minimally invasive and this one-year data shows strong potential for effectiveness and tolerance in patients."

WORKS LIKE A CHARM

Each year, the chemotherapy suites at the Odette Cancer Centre has over 23,000 patient visits. That's a lot of visits and it can get hectic. A unique web-based scheduling system can now make things a little easier and a lot faster for patients and the staff who care for them.

CHARM (Chemotherapy Appointment Reservation Manager) automates processes to more quickly and efficiently manage the administrative side of chemotherapy treatments. It also makes possible better communication with physicians for follow up on more complex treatments. CHARM has helped to reduce wait times and improved patient and staff safety at the same time. Freeing up time for patients is a boon to improving quality of life.

"Together with the upcoming expansion of our Chemotherapy Unit, CHARM and other quality improvements will further benefit patients and their loved ones," says Dr. Maureen Trudeau, head of Medical Oncology and Hematology

Reconstruction At Time Of Breast Cancer Treatment

When cancer affects the breast, for many women the alteration of their femininity can be an emotional journey. For some women, the Odette Cancer Centre has an approach to breast reconstruction that can help soften that distress. The Immediate Breast Reconstruction Clinic offers appropriate patients same-time access to experts

in breast cancer surgery and immediate reconstructive surgery. The clinic is a unique collaboration lead by three breast surgical oncologists, two plastic surgeons trained in oncologic reconstruction, and radiation oncologists.

Lori Vajda, 42, had breast cancer. She came to the Clinic because she ultimately needed a double mastectomy. "It gave me tremendous added confidence knowing my surgeon and my plastic surgeon were working together," says Lori. "They removed the cancer and lowered my risk while doing immediate reconstruction to help me regain a sensual and important part of who I am as a woman."

On the trail of 'mini-strokes'

Sunnybrook's team of stroke specialists have been leading an aggressive approach to diagnosing and treating 'mini-strokes' before they lead to potentially devastating larger strokes that can leave people with paralysis and other permanent disability.

Sunnybrook's Scotiabank Rapid Investigation and Stroke Prevention Program featuring the Dr. Thomas and Harriet Black High-Risk TIA Unit is one of only a few clinics of its kind in the country specializing in urgent care for high-risk Transient Ischemic Attacks (TIA) or so called 'mini-strokes'.

Mini-strokes are important to recognize because they can be critical warning events of an impending serious stroke that could happen within days or weeks.

Treatments applied rapidly after a TIA can reduce the risk of a major stroke by as much as 80 per cent.

By providing fast-track consultation with stroke specialists, state-of-the-art neurovascular diagnostic tests, and initiation of a personalized treatment plan, the Sunnybrook clinic aims to prevent more strokes, avoid hospital admissions, and condense months of patient tests and appointments into a single day.