
Cutting edge technology catching hidden tumours early

A world-class molecular tracer facility for cancer diagnosis and research has come to south western Sydney.

South Western Sydney Local Health District officially launched the molecular science cyclotron facility at Liverpool Hospital where it will prove essential to the timely diagnosis and treatment of tumours.

The cyclotron produces radioisotopes which are used in the identification and therapy of a range of cancers, such as lymphoma, lung, pancreatic, head and neck, breast and prostate cancers.

The isotopes are injected into patients before they undergo a PET scan, highlighting any tumours present, making them easily identifiable and trackable before, during and after treatment.

The isotopes produced by the cyclotron facility can generate clear images and trace abnormal cells inside the body, allowing specialists to diagnose cancer sooner and more effectively, before and after treatment.

Liverpool Nuclear Medicine Head of Department and the District's Medical Imaging Director, Dr Peter Lin, said having a cyclotron co-located with a teaching hospital will allow us to conduct innovative research and places the District at the forefront of molecular diagnostic and therapeutic cancer services.

"This technology allows us to see more clearly whether the drugs used to treat the cancer are working," he said.

"Getting diagnosed and treated for cancer and other diseases can be a frightening time for patients and their families. This facility will help us provide physicians with the answers they need quickly and effectively."

Picton woman, Elizabeth Doonan, 53, was one of the first beneficiaries of the cyclotron, receiving isotopes that enabled early and more accurate assessment of her life-saving targeted cancer treatment.

"When you're so desperate to get help and get well it is such a big thing to get help quickly," she said.

"It's been a tremendous and overwhelming experience and I can't thank South Western Sydney Local Health District enough."

Ms Doonan said it was reassuring to know the isotopes would now be more readily available for patients to get scans and results quickly.

Liverpool Hospital General Manager, Robynne Cooke, said the new facility would make a significant difference to care provided to patients in the Liverpool community.

"We are committed to innovation and providing the latest technology and treatment options where possible," she said.