



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
6 September 2018

Want a cheaper and faster way to diagnose a liver or kidney mass? Use tiny bubbles with ultrasound

CHICAGO -- (Business Wire) – Tiny microbubbles used as ultrasound contrast agents can help patients with liver or kidney masses avoid follow up computed tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance (MR) scans and significantly reduce healthcare costs, according to a study described today at an international physician's conference in Chicago.

"A contrast enhanced ultrasound scan produces excellent images of tumors and can be performed at a much lower cost than CT or MR, there is no radiation, we get immediate information, and we avoid all of the delays related to more expensive imaging," Dr. Ed Grant told physicians and allied health care professionals at the 33rd annual International Bubble Conference .

Grant said his medical center saved \$117,000 annually by using contrast enhanced ultrasound in an initial scan and immediately detecting liver and kidney lesions without waiting for further CT or MR procedures. Grant is Chair of Radiology at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Keck Medical Center and treasurer of the International Contrast Ultrasound Society. His study examined cost and other data from Los Angeles County Hospital.

Ultrasound contrast agents are liquid suspensions of tiny microbubbles that are injected intravenously during an ultrasound scan and are metabolized and expelled from the body within minutes. They are FDA-approved for enhancement of ultrasound scans of the liver and heart, but they also are used safely and effectively throughout the world to scan the kidney, breast and other organs and blood vessels, and to monitor therapy, Grant said.

An initial contrast enhanced ultrasound scan avoided further CT or MR procedures in two-thirds of patients studied, according to Grant.

In addition, the cost of a contrast enhanced ultrasound scan -- \$309 -- was dramatically lower than the cost of CT or MR, which were \$647.31 and \$1116.94, respectively, based on Medicare costs that are widely used throughout the US. In addition, the time to diagnosis was only 5.2 days for contrast enhanced ultrasound, compared to 52 days for CT and 123.5 days for MR.

Grant noted that microbubble contrast agents are extremely safe and can be used in patients with kidney failure. He also stated that ultrasound equipment is significantly less expensive than CT or MR, is portable, and can be used in a variety of clinical settings including hospitals or outpatient clinics.

"This study shows that ultrasound contrast agents are extremely cost effective and have tremendous benefits to patients as well as the health care system," said Dr. Stephanie Wilson, a

professor of radiology at the University of Calgary and co-president of the International Contrast Ultrasound Society.

"If a single hospital center can save \$117,000 per year, one can imagine the cost savings to the health care system while also benefitting patients, she added.

ABOUT ICUS:

ICUS is an international medical society that is dedicated to advancing the appropriate use of contrast enhanced ultrasound to improve patient care. ICUS members include physicians, scientists, and other ultrasound imaging professionals in approximately 60 countries. For more information about ICUS, please visit www.icus-society.org.

CONTACTS:

International Contrast Ultrasound Society

Mark W. Weller, 202-276-7421 or 202-626-8363, mweller@polsinelli.com

Linda M. Feinstein, 847-624-1844 or 312-876-2563, Linda.Feinstein@Dentons.com