

Point-of-Care Ultrasound Improving Care for Chest Patients



Dr Angshu Bhowmik routinely uses point-of-care ultrasound to guide pleural procedures.

Ultrasound guidance is now routinely used for pleural procedures, with current British Thoracic Society guidelines stating that all pleural drain insertions and aspirations should be performed using the technique. Dr Angshu Bhowmik, a consultant chest physician specialising in lung cancer and COPD at Homerton University Hospital, discussed the benefits of point-of-care (POC) ultrasound for clinicians and patients alike: "I first started using ultrasound in my practice in 2008, following the publication of several papers highlighting the potential safety improvements for chest drains and biopsies. Although most of my generation of registrars and consultants had been successfully performing these procedures 'blind' for many years, ultrasound allows you to visualise any unusual anatomical features – such as an enlarged heart or pleural thickening – reducing risks and improving success rates. We put together a business case based on this safety benefit, and chose a highly portable FUJIFILM SonoSite point-of-care system to meet our needs."

"Since this time, we have routinely used POC systems for pleural drains and aspirations. As we have developed our interest in ultrasound further, we have started using it for a number of other applications – such as performing pleural biopsies in patients who are not suitable for thoracoscopic biopsies, or dynamic assessment of the diaphragm for some COPD patients – which is often safer and more convenient for patients, avoiding the need for radiology referrals. Our latest SonoSite Edge™ system offers excellent image quality, as well as a colour Doppler function, providing the best possible balance between resolution, portability and usability."

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Published on : Thu, 23 Feb 2017