

UC Davis cancer patients treated with new catheter technology

BY DIANA SAMUELS

SAN JOSE - A new type of catheter developed by a San Jose company to treat cancer patients is making its way into operating rooms.

The IsoFlow Infusion Catheter, developed by Vascular Designs Inc., is now being used to treat liver cancer patients at the University of California, Davis Medical Center. CEO Robert Goldman said he also has a "bunch of other hospitals about to come on line," though he couldn't disclose details.

"Within a year, things are going to happen very quickly here," Goldman said. "We're going to be hiring a lot more people and growing very, very fast."

While the IsoFlow is currently being used to treat liver cancer, it is envisioned as a treatment for any type of solid tumor. The catheter provides extremely targeted chemotherapy in an outpatient treatment that takes only about an hour. This allows doctors to more quickly and effectively treat cancer patients.

UC Davis Dr. Wayne Monsky, an interventional radiologist, has started using the catheter. Monsky said he thinks the IsoFlow could open up new doors for treating other types of cancer that require a very targeted, delicate approach, such as pancreatic, lung and brain cancers.

"I think this catheter's going to open up a lot of areas where we couldn't do treatments before because of the catheter design," said Monsky, who has been using the device for about a month and has treated four patients. "I think it will help us expand our approach to treatment to different areas of the body."

Vascular Designs has only two employees and is primarily self-funded by Goldman, who put more than \$3 million into the company. Another \$1.8 million came from investor and developer Josh Coughran.

The catheters are manufactured at Hantel Technologies Inc., a medical device design and manufacturing firm in Hayward.

A targeted approach

The IsoFlow catheter, which received FDA marketing clearance in 2009, is a tiny tube that is inserted into a patient's body, directly to a tumor. Two balloons on the catheter are inflated to keep the treatment site isolated from the patients' blood flow, and chemotherapy is pushed guided through the catheter to the tumor.

Goldman, an inventor who developed technology for storing and browsing digital music, turned to medical devices when his sister, Amy, was diagnosed with colon cancer and died at age 40.

The catheter was used to treat the first patient, a woman suffering from a spinal tumor, in 2009 at the University of Wisconsin Medical Center. Goldman said the woman recently died, but lived a couple of years longer than was otherwise expected.

"Right after the treatment she was up and walking and out of pain," Goldman said.

Goldman spent the last couple of years reworking some elements of the catheter's design, and is now pitching his product to doctors and hospitals, primarily on the West Coast.

Catheters are already used to treat liver cancer, but the IsoFlow allows doctors to target the tumors more precisely,

said Monsky. Because the balloons block off the treatment site from the rest of the blood flow, more chemotherapy treatment can be pushed toward the tumor without exposing other areas, he said.

"The design of the catheter is very elegant and addresses some of the problems of current generations of catheters," Monsky said.

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VASCULAR DESIGNS INC.

Headquarters: San Jose
CEO: Robert Goldman
Founded: 2002
Employees: 2
Funding: About \$4.8 million
Web: www.vascular designs.com



DAVIS DEBUT: Robert Goldman, CEO of Vascular Designs, said his company's product is being used to treat liver cancer at the UC Davis Medical Center.

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