

High Flying Point-of-Care Ultrasound



Ultrasound technology is taking to the skies with the Essex Herts Air Ambulance Trust, a charity that provides a free, life-saving Helicopter Emergency Medical Service for the critically ill and injured of Essex, Hertfordshire and the surrounding areas.

Stuart Elms, Clinical Director of the Trust, explained: “We operate two helicopters crewed by full-time pre-hospital care doctors and critical care paramedics who can be rushed to the scene of an incident with highly specialised and advanced life-saving equipment and pharmacy. As part of our practice, we are moving towards using ultrasound for management of cardiac arrest and advanced life support. Working with expert sites such as the Essex Cardiothoracic Centre at Basildon, Harefield Hospital and SonoSite, our aim is to train our critical care paramedics to use point-of-care ultrasound, allowing us to tailor our cardiac care even more accurately.”

“SonoSite is a world leader in point-of-care ultrasound, and its hand-carried iViz instrument lends itself perfectly to pre-hospital use, both in the aircraft and at the scene. The system is small and portable with a good screen that gives a brilliant view, and can be used one handed. The preset views allow rapid set-up and scanning, and are supported by a training mode that allows comparison of normal and abnormal pathology. Ultimately, we also hope to take advantage of the system’s mobile computing capacity to automatically upload data to electronic patient report forms prior to arrival at the hospital. Our aim is to make as much use of ultrasound as we currently do of stethoscopes – whether they are cardiac, medical or trauma patients – helping to improve outcomes.”

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