

Point-of-care ultrasound is a hit in paediatric intensive care



Dr Akash Deep (right) and Vanessa Wickens, UK education manager and clinical lead at SonoSite, with the ultrasound system

Ultrasound technology is helping the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at King's College Hospital to rapidly obtain vascular access in critically ill patients. Dr Akash Deep, Director of PICU, explained: "PICU treats patients ranging in age from just a few days old to 18 years, effectively young adults. In many of these patients, for example a child in septic shock, vascular access must be obtained without delay, and we rely on ultrasound for this procedure. Until recently, this was performed using a hand-held system that was quite old, and we could not always obtain the image quality we needed."

"Our theatres are equipped with point-of-care ultrasound systems. We used one of these for a PICU patient where vascular access was proving particularly difficult, and were amazed by the difference it made; within minutes, an arterial line was in place. I am convinced this contributed to better management of the patient's septic shock by helping us to rationalise inotropes and vasopressors, and we simply could not have done this with our other ultrasound instrument. This played a large part in our decision to obtain a system specifically for PICU. We are also the largest liver transplant centre in Europe, and use continuous renal replacement therapy a great deal. Vascular access is difficult in many of these patients, and the system has proved a real boon for us. We've had it for a few months now, and I see the satisfaction on the registrars' faces when they use it. They are absolutely ecstatic."

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Published on : Sat, 9 Sep 2017