

Ground-breaking digital autopsies to be rolled out across new centres in the UK

Digital autopsies are set to become an increasingly common practice across parts of the UK with the opening of a number of new facilities providing the service. The digital autopsy facilities will provide comfort to families, in many cases allowing a cause of death to be identified swiftly and with either no or minimal invasion of the body, which in turn can help make the burial or cremation process take place with fewer delays and ease the emotional burden.

iGene[®], the life-science company investing £50m in creating a network of digital autopsy centres across England and Wales, is expanding its service with the use of six SOMATOM[®] Definition AS CT systems from Siemens Healthcare. The company has recently installed the first of the imaging systems into its dedicated Sandwell facility in the West Midlands to support pathologists across the region in determining the cause of death. Following the Sandwell installation, the additional systems will be placed in various sites throughout the UK in the coming year.

It is predicted that digital autopsy could be used to establish the cause of death in up to 70% of cases and they are particularly valuable for identifying cerebral haemorrhage, lung pathology, fatal aneurysms and extent of trauma leading to fatality. Certain cases which could be difficult to identify during a conventional post mortem can also be more easily identified using the digital technique, often improving the accuracy of results. Where digital autopsy cannot provide the cause of death alone it can instead help to minimise the need for incisions to the body.

“The merging of innovative CT technology with specialist software will allow these centres to perform advanced examinations, providing a comprehensive picture of the cause of death

without using the invasive techniques that we see in current post-mortem practice,” states Russell Lodge, CT Business Manager at Siemens Healthcare. “The systems will provide radiographers, radiologists and pathologists excellent image quality and sharp contrast to provide an accurate cause of death.”

“Post-mortem imaging is quite different to ante-mortem imaging and it requires the reverse of a lot of traditional scanning practices. Siemens understood what we were trying to achieve and were flexible, tailoring their service to our unique requirements,” states Claire Walker, Digital Autopsy Services Manager at iGene. “The new facilities offer not only comfort for families who are seeking to understand how their loved one died, in a swift and dignified manner, but a highly innovative option for authorities who can use them within investigations.”

The SOMATOM Definition AS systems were chosen due to the user friendly and intuitive interface and Siemens’ unique STRATON™ X-ray tube offering. The virtual post-mortem process acquires a whole body scan at 0.6mm, therefore a robust X-ray tube is required to avoid tube overheat. STRATON X-ray tube offers the combination of high speed and excellent image quality eliminating the need for heat storage capacity with the tube cooling down to its original state within 20 seconds. The systems work alongside iGene INFOPSY® visualisation software to provide either non- or minimally-invasive autopsies.

Siemens Healthcare is one of the world's largest suppliers to the healthcare industry and a trendsetter in medical imaging, laboratory diagnostics, medical information technology and hearing aids. Siemens offers its customers products and solutions for the entire range of patient care from a single source – from prevention and early detection to diagnosis, and on to treatment and aftercare. By optimising clinical workflows for the most common diseases, Siemens also makes healthcare faster, better and more cost-effective. Siemens Healthcare employs some 52,000 employees worldwide and operates around the world www.siemens.co.uk/healthcare.

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Picture caption: Councillor Mahboob Hussain, Deputy Leader Sandwell Council; Councillor Derek Rowley, Mayor of Sandwell and Ash Govind, Global Vice President at iGene London Ltd cut the ribbon to officially open the iGene Sandwell digital autopsy facility.



Picture caption: iGene® is expanding its service with the use of six SOMATOM® Definition AS CT systems from Siemens Healthcare. [Left to right] Sarah Sandhu, Regional Sales Manager at Siemens Healthcare; Claire Walker, Digital Autopsy Services Manager; Ruth Bisbrown-Chippendale, CT Radiographer at iGene London Ltd; Russell Lodge, CT Business Manager; John Brady, Regional Sales Manager; Hefin Thomas, Project Manager at Siemens Healthcare.



About Siemens

Siemens AG (Berlin and Munich) is a global technology powerhouse that has stood for engineering excellence, innovation, quality, reliability and internationality for more than 165 years. The company is active in more than 200 countries, focusing on the areas of electrification, automation and digitalisation. One of the world's largest producers of energy-efficient, resource-saving technologies, Siemens is No. 1 in offshore wind turbine construction, a leading supplier of combined cycle turbines for power generation, a leading provider of power transmission solutions and a pioneer in infrastructure solutions and automation and software solutions for industry. The company is also a leading supplier of medical imaging equipment – such as computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging systems – and a leader in laboratory diagnostics as well as clinical IT. In fiscal 2013, which ended on September 30, 2013, revenue from continuing operations totalled €75.9 billion and income from continuing operations €4.2 billion. At the end of September 2013, Siemens had around 362,000 employees worldwide on the basis of continuing operations. Further information is available on the Internet at www.siemens.co.uk.