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## Dr. Cai implants first MRI-compatible pacemaker at Rome Memorial Hospital

David Reed considers himself a lucky man. Every time he's faced a life-threatening emergency, modern medicine makes a leap forward just in time to give him options that were previously unavailable.

Reed, 81, of Rome, is the first patient in Central New York to receive a pacemaker compatible with MRI scans. Cardiologist John J. Cai, M.D. implanted the new device Tuesday, Mar. 14, at Rome Memorial Hospital, just a month after it was approved by the FDA.

"Mr. Reed is the perfect candidate for this new technology," said Dr. Cai. "Because he is undergoing cancer treatment, he needs to have regular MRIs to monitor his progress. This new technology is going to change the industry significantly."

About 1.5 million Americans have pacemakers, which are devices designed to keep the heart beating at a steady rhythm. Most pacemaker patients are 65 and older and at an age when illnesses and injuries requiring MRI develop.

MRI procedures aren't recommended for people who have traditional pacemakers because they could face serious complications, such as interference with pacemaker operation, damage to system components, lead or pacemaker dislodgement or changes in pacing.

Each year an estimated 200,000 pacemaker patients in the United States forgo MRI scans, according to Medtronic, the developer of the new REVO MRI SureScan pacing system, which is "MR Conditional," and as such, designed to allow patients to be scanned by an MRI machine under specified conditions for use.

"It feels good. I've been just one step ahead of the gun," Reed said, explaining that advancements in cancer treatment helped him survive the same bladder cancer that claimed the life of his brother 10 years before Reed was diagnosed.

"My cancer was in remission for nearly 12 years and then a few months ago, I started feeling a bit of unsteadiness," Reed said. "At first they thought it was a stroke, but then I had a CT scan and they found a brain lesion."

It was while undergoing radiation therapy at Rome's Mohawk Valley Radiation Medicine that his heart condition was detected a week ago. "The nurse didn't like my numbers at all," Reed said, explaining that his heart was beating irregularly. "My numbers were all over the place."

"I put my faith in Dr. Cai's hands. He's really sharp," Reed said, praising the cardiologist for staying on top of the latest technology. "If this had happened a month ago, the technology wouldn't have been available. I'm a lucky man."

Now Reed can proceed with his cancer treatment plan, knowing that he can get an MRI safely.

"If I ever had any doubts about Rome Hospital, I can tell you they are gone. Everyone is on top of everything. Sure there's always bureaucracy, but it all points toward taking care of the patient and that's what counts," Reed said. "The nursing staff was excellent."

Dr. Cai is a cardiologist at Slocum-Dickson Medical Group in New Hartford. He earned his medical degree from Shanghai Medical College in Shanghai, China. After completing his surgical residency at the division of cardio-thoracic surgery, RunJi Hospital, Shanghai Medical College, he gained additional training as a cardiovascular research fellow at the National Institute of Health following three years as a research scientist at the University of Iowa, Division of Cardiology. He then completed his Internal Medicine Residency at Michigan State University followed by an additional three years of clinical cardiology fellowship training in the University of Iowa hospitals and clinics. In 2000, Dr. Cai was elected as the only NASPE fellow (North America Society of Pacing and Electrophysiology). NASPE is currently named The Heart Rhythm Society. He completed an additional clinical cardiac electrophysiology fellow at Loyola University Chicago Medical Center, Illinois with special emphasis on radiofrequency ablation.

Dr. Cai has received many national and regional awards for his research and clinical presentations.

For more information about the advancements in pacemakers, talk to your doctor.



**KEEPS ON TICKING:** Jacqueline Chilluffo, RN, a critical care nurse at Rome Memorial Hospital, checks David Reed's heartbeat as he recovers from surgery. Reed, of Rome, received a new pacemaker that is compatible with MRI scans under specific conditions.

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