

VPDiagnostics Announces Plaque Analysis Software for MRI and Starts a Clinical Trial on Stroke Risk Stratification

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VPDiagnostics, Inc., a Washington state company specializing in MRI image processing software for analyzing vascular disease, announces its new product, MRI-PlaqueView. VPDiagnostics also announces the start of a multi-center clinical trial sponsored by the NIH.

MRI-PlaqueView provides researchers and clinicians an efficient tool for analyzing magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of carotid artery atherosclerosis. It is based on over 15 years of research and validation by the Vascular Imaging Lab at the University of Washington and other leading institutions. MRI-PlaqueView provides semi-automated tools, a streamlined workflow, an optimized user interface, and concise analysis reports. MRI-PlaqueView received FDA 510(k) clearance in December 2008 and will be commercially available in several weeks. MRI-PlaqueView is presently being used in several academic and industry-sponsored clinical trials involving MRI analysis of atherosclerotic disease.

In addition to launching MRI-PlaqueView, VPDiagnostics was awarded a highly competitive NIH grant to design and execute a multi-center clinical trial for using MRI in stratifying patients at high-risk for stroke. This is the first prospective trial in which clinical results will be used to validate the application of MRI imaging analysis in stroke prevention and to support a future FDA submission for stroke risk assessment. The Principal Investigators of this grant are William Kerwin, Ph.D. (VPDiagnostics) and Chun Yuan, Ph.D. (the University of Washington). "Our primary goal is to validate the use of MRI plaque imaging and analysis technology in identifying populations at high-risk for stroke or stroke-related events due to carotid plaque" said Dr. Kerwin, Vice President, Research and Development at VPDiagnostics. Several world-class medical institutions will participate in this clinical trial.

The FDA clearance of MRI-PlaqueView and the start of the clinical trial to validate its application in stroke prevention are the first signs that MRI plaque imaging is rapidly advancing from the research lab into the clinic. Plaque imaging provides additional important information, such as size, morphology, components and, therefore, stability of the atherosclerotic plaque, extending beyond the old paradigm which focused only on narrowing (stenosis) of the arteries. "MRI plaque imaging research and development, both academic and industry, can assist clinicians in identifying high-risk plaque, which is linked to heart attack and stroke. It will also provide researchers with a powerful tool to study the clinical progression of atherosclerosis and its response to treatment," said Chun Yuan, Ph.D., Professor of Radiology, University of Washington.

"We are proud of our innovative and validated technology and product, our experienced team and timely execution. Together with our academic, clinical, and business partners, we will ensure that stroke prevention will be much more effective, thereby reducing the estimated total \$60 billion stroke-related healthcare and economic cost to our society, and saving lives," said Hui Hu, Ph.D., CEO, VPDiagnostics, Inc.

About VPDiagnostics, Inc.

VPDiagnostics, Inc. has acquired exclusive commercial rights to the atherosclerotic plaque analysis technologies developed at the Vascular Imaging Laboratory (VIL), and established research partnerships with other world-class research institutions. The mission of VPDiagnostics is the early identification and intervention of patients with 'vulnerable plaque' or high-risk plaque. The VPDiagnostics management team comprises industry veterans from General Electric and Johnson & Johnson, who have started multiple successful technology companies, and innovative scientists from the University of Washington.

About the University of Washington Vascular Imaging Lab (VIL)

The University of Washington Vascular Imaging Lab (VIL) is lead by Chun Yuan, Ph.D., a widely-respected academic scientist and a pioneer in cardiovascular imaging, and Thomas Hatsukami, M.D., an international known vascular surgeon and a pioneer in vascular imaging. Over the past 15 years, the VIL team has created and validated a broad intellectual property portfolio of state-of-the-art plaque imaging and analysis technologies, including the development of CASCADE (Computer-Aided System for Cardiovascular Disease Evaluation) software. MRI-PlaqueView is the commercial version of CASCADE.

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