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Press Release

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Ultra-thin Endoscopy Significantly Improves Patient's Tolerance as Compared to Conventional Endoscopy in Screening Upper Gastrointestinal Diseases in Adults

Oesophago-gastro-duodenoscopy (OGD) is a very useful and a commonly performed procedure in screening gastrointestinal diseases such as stomach cancer. However, it may cause some discomfort and anxiety to most patients, thereby reduces the willingness of the patient to undergo such investigation; thus, potentially delaying the diagnoses and treatment. In addition, studies have shown that more than 50 % of patients develop some sore throat after OGD using conventional endoscopy.

A study comparing ultra-thin and conventional endoscopy was carried out by the Department of Surgery, the Chinese University of Hong Kong at Alice Ho Miu Ling Hospital, Taipo in 2005. 400 patients were randomized to receive either conventional or ultra-thin endoscopy in a double-blind manner. They were prospectively assessed for tolerance and post-procedure throat pain after the procedure. Dr. Mui Lik Man, who conducted the research, announced that the ultra-thin endoscopy was associated with much higher tolerance and less anxiety as perceived by patients. It also decreases the incidence of throat pain from 41% to 26 % after the procedure. The results were reported at *Digestive Disease Week 2006* at Los Angeles, USA.

At present, near 100% of OGD are performed by using conventional endoscopes with diameters range from 10-13mm in both HA and private hospitals. Although unsedated conventional endoscopy is possible, most patients require sedation to ease anxiety and discomfort. With the introduction of ultra-thin endoscopes, examination can be performed with very light sedation and little discomfort; thus, decreasing the chance of complications related to sedation. It also significantly decreases the degree of throat pain after the procedure.

This ultra-thin endoscope is only 5 mm in diameter at the insertion tip and it is equipped with a high resolution micro CCD, which has made two major advantages over conventional endoscope. Dr. Mui Lik Man explained, "It allows unprecedented insertability, and making even transnasal insertion possible. Moreover, it ensures that the images available are of an extraordinary quality and detail which can be projected onto a high definition monitor for observation and recording purposes." In fact, despite their ultra-slim designs, the ultra-thin endoscope provides image quality equal if not better than conventional endoscopes.

Union Hospital would like to introduce this new service to provide an alternate choice for patients. Dr. Mui said, "With technological advancement nowadays, OGD examination by using ultra-thin endoscopy should be a relatively comfortable and easy procedure that can be done in less than 15 minutes causing the least disruption to the patient's normal daily activities and highest patient satisfaction."

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