

## SIU Med School Now Offers Non-Invasive Imaging Test

A new procedure, endoscopic ultrasonography or EUS, is now available from gastroenterologists at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield.

EUS combines endoscopy and ultrasound, providing more details than other imaging procedures and often leading to quicker diagnosis and treatment. Springfield is the only medical center providing the procedure in Illinois outside of the Chicago and St. Louis areas.

“This is a safe, non-invasive procedure that gives us very detailed images,” says Dr. Mei Chris Huang, assistant professor of internal medicine at SIU. Huang has performed more than 100 EUS procedures in the last year.

“This procedure is especially important because it can help us make early cancer diagnosis as well as rule out conditions and prevent unnecessary treatments,” explains Huang, who is also a faculty member of the Simmons Cancer Institute at SIU.

Endoscopy images are transmitted through a camera at the end of a flexible tube that is passed either into the esophagus and stomach through the mouth or through the rectum into the colon. For EUS, more detailed images are provided with the addition of an ultrasound transducer at the end of the tube. The sound waves sent into an organ or tissues from the digestive tract within the body, rather than from the body surface as in a traditional ultrasound, provide more accurate and more detailed images.

Conditions that can be diagnosed include abnormal growths such as cancer and non-cancerous lesions as well as diseases of the gastrointestinal tract, pancreas or bile duct. During an EUS, biopsies can be obtained or a cyst drained.

Huang said that physicians refer patients for EUS for any abnormalities they need evaluated or treated. Some of these abnormalities may cause a variety of general symptoms in a patient such as abdominal pain and the area of concern can be examined during the procedure. Various causes can be ruled out, often preventing unnecessary treatments.

Memorial Medical Center purchased the EUS equipment last year for use in its SPA or special procedures area. The equipment is being added at St. John’s Hospital.

Like normal endoscopy, EUS is an outpatient procedure done in a hospital’s procedure area. The process takes 15 to 45 minutes and produces little discomfort. A light sedative is often given and some patients sleep.

EUS is considered standard of care and is covered by most insurance plans as well as Medicare and Medicaid. Because it is not used for traditional endoscopy treatments such as colonoscopies, a physician referral is needed.

Huang joined SIU’s faculty in 2006 after a year on the faculty at Washington University (WU) School of Medicine and completing a three-year fellowship in gastroenterology at WU (2005). She completed her residency at Barnes Jewish Hospital (2002) and earned her medical degree from the University of Tennessee College of Medicine (1999). She completed her graduate degree as well as a postdoctoral research fellowship in molecular biology at Vanderbilt Medical School (1988-95). Huang is board certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology. Her research interests include colorectal cancer.

For information, contact SIU’s Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at 217-545-0173 weekdays.