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New equipment to help tackle skin cancer donated to Royal Cornwall Hospital

7:00am Wednesday 3rd July 2013 in Cornwall

A national charity has donated £15,000 of specialist equipment to the dermatology unit at the Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust.

With the highest incidence of skin cancer in the UK, the dermatology experts at RCHT are widely respected for their studies looking at environmental causes and in particular the use of photodynamic therapy – the use of a topical drug applied to the tumour which is subsequently activated with light – in the treatment of the disease.

For many years it has meant that patients in Cornwall have been able to benefit from leading edge treatments and this new equipment will allow them to develop even better techniques.

Dr Alison Curnow, who has led skin cancer research studies in Cornwall for 14 years and which continue under the wing of the University of Exeter Medical School said, "Thanks to PDT for Cancer Cure, the dermatology unit at the Royal Cornwall Hospital is among the first in the UK to take delivery of this latest equipment. As well as the enormous benefits for patients, it opens new avenues in terms of research into new treatments for skin cancer. We are already recognised as being in the top 10 PDT research centres in Europe and have high hopes for expanding our work further."

The £12,000 BF-RhodoLED PDT treatment lamp, together with portable Ambulight PDT Multi devices, has been donated to the Trust by PDT for Cancer Cure. The charity was established in 2011 with the aim of promoting the use of PDT in skin cancer treatment and to fundraise to equip every major hospital to be able to provide a local service for patients.

Consultant dermatologist, Dr Sandra Campbell, said "The two pieces of equipment offer us the latest technology in photodynamic treatment. Skin cancer is on the increase and particularly so in Cornwall. For certain types of skin cancer PDT is a hugely important treatment and this opens new avenues for us to treating people locally.

The static lamp has much greater control to tailor treatment to individual patients. We can vary the strength of the light therapy which is particularly useful when treating sensitive areas of the body, making it less painful.

The mobile Ambulight systems can be worn by patients at home to treat superficial non-melanoma skin cancer and their triple-heads mean we can treat several lesions at once, reducing visits to hospital, which is good news for patients. The reusable handsets also mean they are more cost effective."

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