Imaging Technology Could Lower Coronary Disease Mortality Rate

Purdue Research Park

Patients undergoing angioplasty or other heart-related medical procedures could benefit from a new technology being developed with funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Optical imaging technology from Wasatch Photonics Inc. creates images of coronary artery walls in vivo to show where lesions and plaques have formed. Physicians can use the images to determine the best course of action, including where a stent might be placed.

William J. Brown, vice president of business development at Wasatch Photonics, said the outcome of developing the technology will be the availability of a new tool to identify and treat coronary artery disease.

"This disease affects an estimated 16 million Americans and is a primary cause of heart attacks and strokes. Identifying and treating plaque buildup and other intravascular conditions could reduce the morbidity and mortality rates from coronary artery disease," he said. "Our technology, called intravascular optical coherence tomography, provides detailed imaging information for physicians to use in plaque assessment and stent implantation and monitoring. Our system, with its increased image resolution capability and competitive cost, will provide a significant improvement over the current systems."

Wasatch Photonics received a two-year Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Phase II grant for $498,325 from the NSF. The grant provides funding to continue developing the intravascular optical coherence tomography system. Brown said the grant also validates the company's approach.

"The National Science Foundation has a long history of funding both basic research and, via the SBIR program, commercialization of innovation at small companies," he said.

Wasatch Photonics Inc., with headquarters in Logan, Utah, and a division in the Research Triangle Park in Durham, N.C., opened an office in the Purdue Research Park of West Lafayette. Brown said opening the office offers strategic benefits to the company.

"We want to expand our presence in the Midwest, and opening the office in the Purdue Research Park is a natural fit for our goals," he said. "We also look forward to establishing a connection with Purdue University, one of the nation's pre-eminent research universities."

Officials from Wasatch Photonics will be at booth #1406 at the 245th American Chemical Society National Meeting & Exposition [1] April 7-11 in New Orleans.

About Wasatch Photonics Inc.
Founded in 2002, Wasatch Photonics Inc. [2] designs, manufactures and markets high-performance Raman spectrometers, Optical Coherence Tomography systems, enhanced holographic optics for optical networking, spectroscopy, test and measurement, and medical imaging applications. Their high-performance Volume Holographic Optic Elements (HOEs) and gratings are used in a diverse set of industries, including those in the defense and security, chemical manufacturing, pharmaceutical, medical, energy, education, computer, and electronics markets. Their products are based on proprietary holographic recording media and Dickson grating technologies.

About Purdue Research Park
The Purdue Research Park [3], with four locations across Indiana, has the largest university-affiliated business incubation complex in the country. The park network is home to about 200 companies that employ 4,000 people and are located in West Lafayette, Indianapolis, Merrillville and New Albany.

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