INTEGRATED IMAGING

New cardiovascular technology helps Rockdale Medical Center provide cutting-edge care

BY RENEE LePERE

STEADY HANDS: [illegible], RTR, special tech and interventional radiologist, watches as Mark C. [illegible], MD, prepares for a procedure. Left: [illegible] imaging technology [illegible] Pam [illegible] Wright, RN, [illegible] to suit up [illegible] aprons.

Rockdale Medical Center, Conyers, GA, is among a handful of hospitals in the U.S. where an integrated state-of-the-art angiography system allows clinicians to render high-resolution images, access hemodynamics information and view patient history in one setting.

With a few keystrokes or taps to touch-screen monitors, Rockdale staff can take pictures from as many angles as necessary and quickly diagnose coronary or vascular blockages and other cardiac problems.

The leading-edge technology allows the system to provide extremely detailed cardiac and vascular study images.

Physicians instantly have a view of the patient's heart, and results are accessible from workstations throughout the hospital. Reports also can be immediately faxed to the patient's referring physician.

'Tremendously Streamlined'

The new equipment is composed of three parts: a fluoroscopy system that takes the actual pictures; a hemodynamic system that allows pressure to be measured in the heart and vessels being examined; and the archiving system.

The system allows physicians to diagnose common conditions like blockages in cardiac arteries, damage from a heart attack and ventricular aneurysms.

The technology also facilitates diagnosis and treatment of blocked arteries in other parts of the body, such as the legs, arms and kidneys, noted Becky Upchurch, MBA, BS, RN, director of cardiovascular services at the 138-bed hospital.

Since they are integrated, the data and pictures "flow" automatically. Reports don't have to be printed, and nurses can move to the next patient while the physician completes the reports. The archiving system can hold up to 100 cases on the local storage system or 5 years of patient records on a larger archive that can handle up to 100,000 cases.