



Remarkable clinical value

Philips HD9 ultrasound brings studies in-house

Who/where

Annapolis OB-GYN Associates, PA, a group of 12 physicians and two nurse midwives, with four offices in Annapolis, Maryland and the surrounding area

Challenge

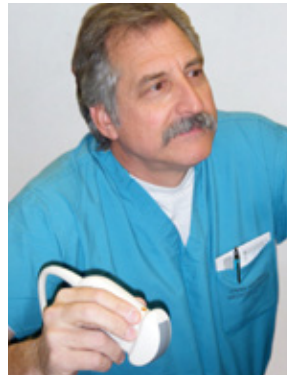
Providing stellar ultrasound image quality with a system that meets budget constraints

Solution

The Philips HD9, a feature-rich system that provides advanced imaging, including 3D/4D, at an affordable price

Annapolis OB-GYN Associates is a busy private practice with four offices, two of which offer ultrasound scanning. When the physicians needed a new ultrasound scanner for the office in Gambrills, Maryland, they were focused on image quality, but at the same time, constrained by budget. With these needs in mind, they chose the Philips HD9 system. The HD9's image quality gave the physicians the confidence to scan more patients on-site, rather than referring them to outside providers.

Today, two part-time sonographers scan an average of 15 patients per day on the HD9 system. "Before we got the HD9, we were sending out all comprehensive mid-pregnancy studies because we wanted better image quality," explains Mark Repka, M.D. "Now we can offer that quality in-house, so we don't have to send our patients off-site to the radiologist or maternal fetal medicine specialist. In fact, now we only use the maternal fetal medicine specialist to evaluate an abnormality after we've diagnosed it based on our scans."



Mark Repka, M.D.



Nicole Sutton, RDMS

According to Nicole Sutton, RDMS, patients also appreciate the on-site scanning. "Because we can do so much in-house, patients learn the results relatively quickly," Sutton says. "Often they'll have an appointment right after the scan, so they can hear the results then, and talk directly to their doctor, rather than someone that they have never even heard of calling them with the results."

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“While the purpose of the ultrasound is to make sure the baby is okay, there is also a big wow factor in OB scans.”



Both Repka and Sutton describe the HD9's image quality as consistently excellent. “The GYN setting is really great,” Sutton says. “You can see fibroids, the lining of the uterus, and ovaries more clearly. With the OB setting, the kidneys and heart are much clearer, and that makes it easier to see abnormalities.”

While image quality was the primary factor in choosing a system, cost was also a consideration. “We compared prices and this was in line with what we were willing to spend with an image that we thought was comparable to that of a much more expensive machine,” Repka says. “We had experience with the Philips line and we were pleased with the other Philips systems we had, both in terms of image quality and low maintenance.”

Repka adds that 4D capability wasn't originally a purchase requirement, but that the group was pleased to find it could acquire 3D/4D capability at an acceptable price point. “Because we weren't expecting to acquire 3D/4D capability, we're still working out how we're going to use it,” he says. Repka notes that it provides the ability to hone in on cardiac and facial anomalies more easily, and he anticipates using it for these applications.

Nuchal translucency scans grow ultrasound department

Annapolis OB-GYN now performs comprehensive first trimester studies, including nuchal translucency scans. Repka says that while the old scanner was capable of nuchal translucency studies, the image quality of the HD9 makes it easier to perform them in-house.

“With nuchal translucencies, we're measuring the distance between two echogenic areas, so we need the distinction to be very clear,” Sutton says. “A lot of the rest of the first trimester exam is checking size and dates, and that can be done well on most systems because we're using a transvaginal transducer. But I think the real test of first trimester screening is the nuchal, and that is very clear on this machine, even if the patient is on the heavy side.”

HD9 delivers wow factor to fetal scans

The HD9 has a 17-inch high resolution LCD monitor with an articulating arm that swivels left and right and moves up and down for easy viewing. Sutton believes that for fetal scanning in particular, there is a non-medical aspect that is enhanced by the high resolution and large screen size of the HD9 system. “While the purpose of the ultrasound is to make sure the baby is okay, there is also a big wow factor in OB scans,” she says. “The patients love being able to see so clearly, and the 3D images are exciting for them. The screen size, and the fact that I can easily turn it for the patient to see better, is really helpful. With our old system, the screen didn't tilt, and I had to tilt the entire machine, which was hard on my body. We also have a wall-mounted monitor so that the entire family can watch the ultrasound.”



In addition to the clinical advantages of the HD9, Sutton claims the system also supports her time management. The HD9 is equipped with Tissue Specific Imaging (TSI), which optimizes the system for the specific transducer and exam type, resulting in excellent image quality with little need for time-wasting adjustments. It also features iSCAN, which automatically adjusts multiple parameters in 2D and Doppler exams with the touch of a button. "iSCAN is a useful feature," Sutton says. "It saves time because I don't need to fiddle with a lot of buttons to adjust my penetration and focal zones." Another timesaver is the quad view tool, a tool that displays four images on a single screen. Sutton explains that quad view is particularly helpful for amniotic fluid index studies because she can see all four pockets that require measurement on a single screen.

Repka adds that additional factors also make the HD9 well-suited for a busy, office-based, women's healthcare practice. "The system itself is small, and the transvaginal transducers are small, which is a nice aspect," he says. "It has good abdominal and transvaginal transducers, which are two things that are important to obstetrics and gynecology. Mobility is important, as is the fact that it doesn't require a lot of maintenance. It is a great machine for an office-based practice."

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