

Kubtec XPERT Imager Helps Doctors, Techs Gain Efficiency

At any busy imaging center, delays can be costly. For breast biopsy patients, unnecessary gaps between the removal of a specimen and imaging of a sample can mean added time in a biopsy room, with the breast compressed and needle in place. For physicians and technologists, delays can cost valuable clinical time.

To eliminate delays, The Breast Center at Saint Barnabas Ambulatory Care Center in Livingston, NJ, turned to Kubtec, of Milford, CT, a company renowned for its specimen imaging technology. Kubtec's XPERT 40 biopsy specimen radiography system, which Saint Barnabas implemented in 2007, enables definitive specimen imaging and evaluation right in the biopsy room—with virtually no delay.

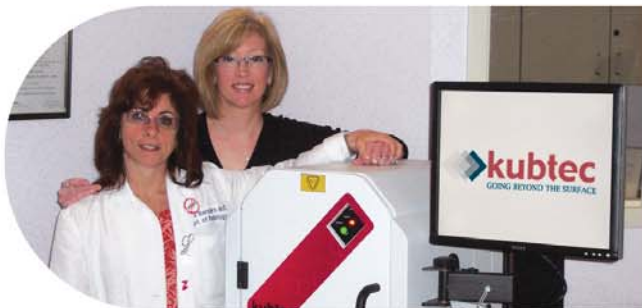


"I wanted to x-ray specimens in a way that would allow us to get our patients through the procedure faster," said Linda Sanders, M.D., medical director for The Breast Center. "In the past it was often difficult finding a vacant mammography room where we could image specimens, and patients had to wait—causing unnecessary anxiety for the woman."

Staffed by nine radiologists, three of whom perform biopsies, and 18 technologists—six of them interventional—Saint Barnabas completes an estimated 60,000 mammograms annually. About 3,000 needle localization procedures and surgical biopsies also are performed. Before the XPERT was installed, tissue samples were walked by a technologist to a separate room and imaged to make sure that an adequate tissue sample had been collected. The tech then had to walk back with the results.

According to Dr. Sanders, the process was costing Saint Barnabas eight minutes of needless wait time per procedure—or 400 hours per year. "It was too time-consuming to run around the department with specimens," said Anne Davidson, RT (R) (M), supervisor of breast intervention. We began investigating other alternatives.

At about that time, a Kubtec representative contacted the Radiology Department. Product demonstrations were scheduled and the XPERT's capabilities were evaluated. X-ray systems from other vendors were scrutinized, each system was researched extensively, and the XPERT was ultimately selected.



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"Kubtec was one of the few companies that actively pursued us, followed through on its promises, and came out here on a schedule that we provided for them," Davidson said. "They were very accommodating—everything was done based upon our needs."

Introduced in 2004, the XPERT 40 is a self-contained and shielded cabinet x-ray system designed to image both surgically excised and needle core biopsy specimens. It provides high resolution, high contrast images using either radiographic film up to 10 x 12 inches in size or digitally up to 8 x 8 inches in size; all digital systems use Kubtec's DICOM compliant DIGICOM software suite to acquire, process, print, send images to PACS, and access the modality work list.

With its small focal spot x-ray source and adjustable sample positioning capability, the XPERT 40 provides variable magnification for increased visibility and sharpness. Its x-ray source output up to 50 kV and 1.0 mA enables the capture of high-resolution images of even the largest surgical specimens. Easy to operate, the XPERT reduces the time that excised specimens remain in the OR. It also facilitates inspection of tissue specimens in pathology departments or laboratories. In fact, its compact size, minimal weight, and standard AC power requirement allow it to be conveniently situated and safely operated in most environments.

"We really appreciated its small footprint," Dr. Sanders said. "And, with Kubtec we had the option of going with a larger camera if we wanted," Davidson added. "I don't believe the other systems offered that." ***Most important, though, was the system's ability to image specimens quickly and clearly.***

"Being able to get an excellent image in a few seconds, and knowing we have the calcifications in our specimen, greatly facilitates getting patients off the stereotactic table quickly," Dr. Sanders said. Also important was the system's ease of installation and use. "It was very easy to learn how to use," Dr. Sanders said, adding that nearly 3,000 studies have been completed so far using the XPERT.

"Kubtec brought it in and we were using it that same day," Davidson said. "We've not had any issues. If there's a technical question, I'm usually able to resolve it. If not, then Kubtec has been more than accommodating in either helping over the phone or sending a field engineer out. Their support has been excellent."

Because the system is situated right in the biopsy room, only one tech rather than two is required during a procedure. Previously, a second tech was needed to remain with the patient while the specimen was transported for x-ray. The new system frees techs to do what they do best: manage patients.

"We were able to decrease the number of techs needed to do a procedure, and there is still a tech in the room with the patient at all times," Davidson said. "We're much more efficient. The system has enabled us to reduce the amount of time that we need to do stereotactic procedures, allowing us to accommodate more patients. It's been a good advantage to have the system integrated with the procedures."

Clearly, the XPERT has paid for itself. Doctors and techs are more efficient, women spend less time under anesthesia, patient discomfort has been minimized, and procedures are completed faster. Everyone at Saint Barnabas wins, thanks to a company that provides old-fashioned service with a smile.

"It frees our techs to attend to other patients, and it means our doctors don't have to wait for a specimen x-ray," Dr. Sanders said. "It's a very reliable machine." Davidson went a step further. ***"I would highly recommend this to any busy breast center," she said. "Our doctors are thrilled—it's very impressive to have the system in our breast center. Most don't have that luxury."***

