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## MODERN CT SCANNER FOR MALTA GIANT LEAP FORWARD IN CANCER DIAGNOSTICS



The installation of a modern PET scanner in the public hospital in Malta provides the general public with access to improved cancer diagnosis. Until recently, patients who needed cancer diagnostic services were obliged either to travel abroad or go to a private clinic, which was for financial reasons impossible for many of Malta's inhabitants. The project therefore reduces inequalities in the Maltese health system.

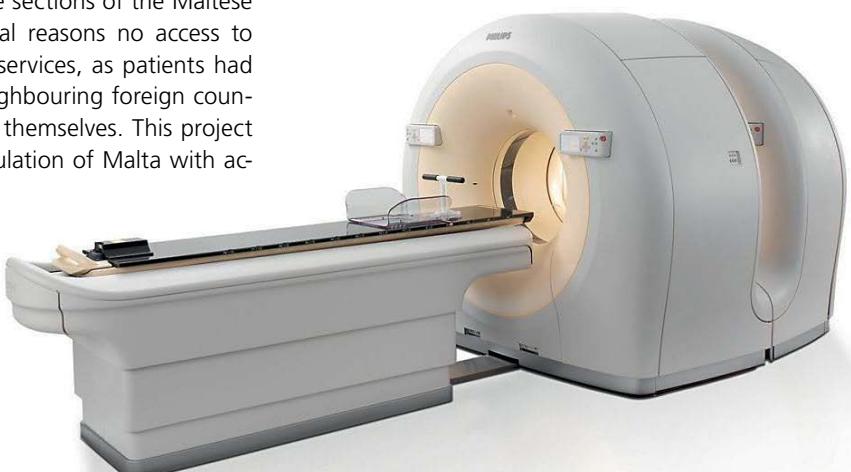
Treating cancer efficiently and successfully requires modern diagnostic infrastructure. In Malta this infrastructure was until recently only available in one private clinic. As a result, large sections of the Maltese population had for financial reasons no access to modern cancer diagnostic services, as patients had to pay for treatment in neighbouring foreign countries or in the private clinic themselves. This project will provide the entire population of Malta with access to these services.

### A NEW, MODERN CANCER DIAGNOSTIC FACILITY

The effective treatment of cancer requires precise diagnostic technology and detailed data. The radiological infrastructure for early diagnosis of cancer in Malta was inadequate. Positron Emission Tomography (PET) is a new, quick and precise method of diagnosing cancer. However, PET scans are very expensive.

### ENSURING ACCESS FOR ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY

As a result of the project, a modern PET scanner was financed and installed in Malta's principal public healthcare facility, the Mater Dei Hospital. The installation of this PET scanner in a public hospital, i.e. as part of Malta's public healthcare services, contributes to providing the population with equal access to medical care. The poorer segments of the Maltese population no longer need to pay for this therapy themselves as Malta's healthcare service reimburses patients the costs of oncological treatment in the hospital. This is also the first step towards setting up an independent oncology centre in this hospital. To select the PET scanner and train its personnel to operate the equipment, the hospital worked in co-operation with the Oncology Institute of Southern Switzerland (IOSI) in Bellinzona.



### This project therefore:

- installed a PET scanner in the public Mater Dei Hospital in Malta;
- trained personnel to use the PET scanner;
- promoted the establishment of an independent oncology centre in the Mater Dei Hospital;
- ensured access to improved cancer diagnostic services for the entire population of Malta, regardless of their financial situation;
- improved cancer diagnosis and treatment in Malta

Switzerland provided CHF 2.8 million from the Swiss enlargement contribution to support this project. Since the scanner was installed in the Mater Dei public hospital at the beginning of 2013, 10,000 patients have undergone PET scans. Following the completion of the project, maintenance and personnel costs will now be fully borne by Malta's public health system.

### THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

#### OBJECTIVE

Improving social security

#### THEME

Health

#### COUNTRY

Malta

#### PARTNERS

Oncology Institute of Southern Switzerland (IOSI) in Bellinzona

#### STARTING POINT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

To receive a cancer diagnosis, patients in Malta were obliged either to travel abroad or to seek treatment in the expensive private clinic in Malta. Because of differences in people's ability to afford this medical care, there was unequal access to healthcare in Malta.

#### OBJECTIVE

Purchasing and installing a PET scanner in the Mater Dei Hospital has ensured access to cancer diagnosis for the entire population of Malta. In addition, the project helped establish an independent oncology centre in the hospital.

#### ACTIVITIES

- Purchasing and installing the PET scanner
- Training hospital staff to use the scanner

#### TARGET GROUPS

Entire Maltese population, particularly the poorer segments of the population

#### COSTS

Total project costs:  
CHF 3.54 million  
Swiss contribution:  
CHF 2.79 million

#### RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The Medical Imaging Division of the Mater Dei Hospital in collaboration with the Health Department of the Maltese Ministry for Social Policy

#### DURATION

2010 – 2013



*The availability of PET/CT technology at Mater Dei Hospital will have a significant impact on the way we manage our patients. Oncology patients will benefit by having rapid access to PET scanning, which is proving to be an indispensable tool in the accurate staging of disease, follow-up and assessing response to therapy. The data obtained from scans will also be used in radiotherapy planning at the new adjacent oncology hospital. Similarly, cardiac patients will benefit by having faster access to a technology for diagnosing coronary artery disease.*

*The addition of routinely available PET/CT technology will boost our diagnostic armamentarium in more ways than one and will provide an invaluable service to our citizens.*

Dr. Anthony Samuel,  
Consultant Specialist in Nuclear Medicine and  
Chairman of the Department of Radiology,  
Mater Dei Hospital