

Giant 256-slice CT scanner is tested

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U.S. scientists at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine have started a three-month safety and clinical test of a 256-slice computed tomography scanner.

The new Japanese-made, 2-ton device -- believed to be the world's most advanced CT imaging software and machine -- has four times the detector coverage of its immediate predecessor, the 64-CT.

The Aquilion beta 256, with a sticker price of more than \$1 million, is expected to win approval for general clinical use within a year.

Dr. Joao Lima, a Johns Hopkins cardiologist who is leading the study, said the device can cover, in a single scan, four times the area of current CT devices, capturing an image about 5 inches in diameter -- a slice thick enough to image most individual organs in one swoop, including the brain and heart, entire joints, and most of the lungs and liver.

Scientists said the new, faster device will also make it possible to scan patients with arrhythmia, acquiring a full image in the time it takes for just one heart beat.

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