

# Ultrasound software spin-out to save NHS millions

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The software combines information from standard ultrasound scans. Photo: Hubenthal/USAF

A new spin-out from Oxford University will improve the quality and diagnostic power of the most widely used diagnostic imaging tool, ultrasound imaging.

Intelligent Ultrasound, set up by the University's technology transfer company Isis Innovation, will develop software solutions to reduce the risk of incorrect or missed diagnoses and avoid costly, inconvenient rescans.

'We expect this software will save the [National Health Service](#) in excess of £40 million pounds per year in cardiology diagnostics alone,' said Andy Hill, CEO of Intelligent Ultrasound.

Intelligent Ultrasound's software solutions are based on research from Professor Alison Noble of the Institute of Biomedical Engineering, part of Oxford University's Department of Engineering Science. Professor Noble, the Technikos Professor of Biomedical Engineering, said: 'We are combining conventional ultrasound scanning with advanced automated image analysis post-processing to improve the diagnostic quality of scans and ensure that the doctor has the best ultrasound-based information to make a clinical decision.'

'It is perhaps the most exciting time in over 20 years to work in ultrasound research due to the rapid developments in 2D and 3D imaging. My laboratory at Oxford is responding to the clinical pull to dramatically reduce healthcare costs by using cost-effective technology such as ultrasound as an alternative to more costly MRI and CT scanning.'

The new company will be supported by the NHS National Innovation Centre, which is committed to accelerating the development of innovative technologies likely to deliver significant benefits to patients and the NHS, and has contributed a development award to the company's fund raising. The company's other investors include the firm's founders and the Oxford Invention Fund.

There are over 200,000 ultrasound machines in use in the US and Europe and in the order of half as many again in the rest of the world. The wide range of applications where medical ultrasound is used includes antenatal scanning, diagnosis of disease and structural defects of the heart in cardiology, and ultrasound-guided surgery.

Colin Callow, Head of the NHS National Innovation Centre, said: 'By creating the right environment and infrastructure for collaboration and partnership between industry, academia and the NHS, the National Innovation Centre can provide access to the expertise necessary to

support the rapid development of exciting innovations so that they are truly 'NHS Market ready', identifying and solving adoption barriers both technical and organisational – before the product hits the market.

'As a co-founder and through this development award, the NHS National Innovation Centre can make it easier and quicker for great innovations like Intelligent Ultrasound's technology to reach the service and improve patient care.'

Tom Hockaday, MD of Isis Innovation, which managed the spin-out process said: 'This is a University technology which will have a positive impact for clinicians, patients, and the taxpayer, as well as investors.'

The first version of the Intelligent Ultrasound software for use in echocardiography is expected to be available for sale within six months. Further versions are being developed for stress-echocardiography, obstetrics and ultrasound-guided surgery.

The company's clinical lead is Dr Aris Papageorghiou, a consultant obstetrician at Oxford's Nuffield Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and an expert in the use of [ultrasound](#) to monitor foetal development.

Provided by Oxford University

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