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Press Release

NEW BONE DENSITY SCANNER AT THE 'MIN'

Bath's Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) Foundation Trust, locally known as 'the Min', has installed a brand new state of the art bone density scanner.

The new machine is a dual energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) scanner and is used to measure bone mineral density, to assess whether a person's bones have become fragile and more likely to fracture. This can occur in conditions such as osteoporosis or as a side effect of certain treatments.

One in two women and one in five men over the age of 50 in the UK will suffer a bone fracture, mainly due to poor bone health.

The RNHRD is a leading centre for the treatment, diagnosis and management of osteoporosis and those at increased risk of fracture, as well as other bone diseases. The metabolic bone group consists of specialist staff providing high quality treatment based on best practice and research.

Dr Bhalla, consultant rheumatologist at the RNHRD said: "Identifying conditions such as osteoporosis or fragile bones does not automatically mean that your bones will break, simply that you have a greater risk of fracture which we can tackle through a combination of effective drug treatments, physiotherapy and practical support.

"Accurate bone density measurements are crucial to ensure that we have the information we require to best meet the needs of our patients."

Dr Bhalla continued: "Our new Dexa scanner includes a hoist to improve access for less abled people, a lower couch and a greater weight capacity than our previous scanner. It will ensure an even better service for the 3500 adults and children we scan each year."

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Dr Gillian Rice, Bristol GP and former BBC presenter, woman's magazine columnist and radio doctor visited the 'Min' to mark the official opening of the new scanner.

Dr Rice said: "I was here eighteen years ago to open the first DEXA scanner at the RNHRD so it's great to be back and see the new and improved version.

"It's wonderful to reflect on the thousands of people who have benefited from a DEXA scan during that time. Often there are no symptoms of osteoporosis until a bone is broken, so measuring bone density is a useful way to identify people who may be at risk."

Dr Rice continued: "My mother and my aunt suffered from osteoporosis so I am passionate about the importance of early diagnosis, it provides a better opportunity to adopt lifestyle changes or start treatments that reduce the risk of broken bones."

The previous scanner had been in operation for 18 years and was equipped with the very latest APEX software which gives improved precision when monitoring changes in bone density over time. The software was bought with charitable donations from the National Osteoporosis Society (NOS) and will be transferred to the new DEXA scanner.

DEXA scanning is a simple, painless procedure .If you think you are at risk of osteoporosis please talk to your GP to discuss whether a scan at the RNHRD would be useful.

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Notes for Editors:

- The RNHRD NHS FT is a national specialist rehabilitation and rheumatology hospital based in Bath. Offering services to adults, children and young people the Trust has expertise in general and complex:
 - Rheumatological and musculoskeletal conditions
 - Neurological rehabilitation
 - Chronic pain management
 - Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME
 - www.rnhrd.nhs.uk
- The team at the 'Min' have established expertise in osteoporosis The hospital provides for adults on an inpatient and outpatient basis and also runs a paediatric osteoporosis clinic.
- If you would like more information about osteoporosis please contact the National Osteoporosis Society www.nos.org.uk