

Ray of Light

Consultant radiologist Dato' Dr Azlin Azizan of KPJ Ampang Puteri Specialist Hospital X-rays his profession. **By Ezilea Omar**



Radiology involves the study and application of imaging technology, such as X-ray and radiation, to diagnose and treat diseases. When it comes to this branch of healing, Malaysia is on par with other top medical tourism destinations, says Dato' Dr Azlin Azizan, consultant radiologist at KPJ Ampang Puteri Specialist Hospital.

"We are a lot more affordable, but offer quality services and equipments such as X-ray, ultrasound, Computed Tomography (CT) scan, and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)," says Dr Azlin. "In terms of expertise, our radiologists are trained professionals." There are about 200 qualified radiologists in the country, with numbers on the rise due to the popularity of radiology courses at local universities.

Accordingly, KPJ Ampang Puteri has invested large sums in its radiology centre. "We are replacing our equipment with newer technology," says Dr Azlin, who decided to specialise in radiology because he was fascinated by the "fancy" equipment. "Doing my housemanship after graduation, I started interacting with radiologists and found it interesting - that's when I decided to specialise in the field."



Top: CT scan images are viewed by a radiologist, Bottom: A patient undergoing a CT scan



Dato' Dr Azlin Azizan

The challenge for specialists such as Dr Azlin is that radiology equipment is continually being upgraded, requiring the doctors who use it to constantly learn new skills. "We need to keep up with the new technology as engineers are constantly updating the equipment," he says, pointing out that just ten years ago the CT scan was extremely slow. "You couldn't even look at the heart then."

Nowadays, the computer can recreate images of almost every part of the body, from blood vessels to the brain. A special dye is injected into the blood stream so that body parts are highlighted in the computer. "With modern technology, we are able to image the entire body through a scan that takes less than 0.3 seconds," explains the doctor.

Of course, radiation is always a concern, which is why the team at KPJ Ampang Puteri aims to reduce it as much as they can. "New innovations are always coming up that help to significantly reduce radiation during scanning," he says.

One such innovation is the 640-slice CT scan, where, because of the number of times the machine scans your body, the overall dose of radiation is much lower than the old 64-slice CT scan. However, Dr Azlin stresses that the radiation patients are exposed to during the scanning process is never dangerous, and is always closely monitored. In fact, "For an MRI there's no radiation whatsoever, and you actually are exposed to more cosmic radiation when flying than you are when being X-rayed."

According to Dr Azlin, radiologists serve a very important role by making the treatment of



Dr Azlin in his office in KPJ Ampang Puteri Specialist Hospital

patients much easier for other doctors. "We are able to pinpoint exactly what is wrong with the patient and make accurate diagnosis," he says. By scanning, a number of problems can be easily detected, such as blocked vessels, kidney stones, cysts and tumours. Radiologists also perform minimally invasive surgery, where a cut is made in the thigh area and a catheter inserted into the artery. This form of surgery heals faster and eliminates the need for long hospital stays.

According to Dr Azlin, the best part about being a radiologist is that, "There is always something new to learn, which makes this such a challenging, and rewarding, career." **KL**

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About KPJ Ampang Puteri Specialist Hospital

At prices that are much cheaper than in most countries, Malaysia offers first-class medical services and treatments. This is particularly true at world-class hospital networks such as the KPJ Group. Part of the KPJ Group, KPJ Ampang Puteri Specialist Hospital consists of a highly reputable team of resident and visiting medical consultants, who are not only well qualified but also very experienced in their respective fields. They are backed and supported by dedicated nursing and paramedical staff in all the disciplines of medicine, including speciality areas such as orthopaedic surgery, plastic surgery, cardiac and neurosurgical services. These dedicated doctors, surgeons and nurses have been carefully selected for their professional expertise and commitment to deliver personalised services. For more information, visit www.kpjhealth.com.my

