

Subcutaneous ICD comes to Africa

For patients at risk of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) is a viable treatment option. It has been shown to effectively stop 95% or more arrhythmias and has a [survival rate of about 19 out of 20 people](#)

The [Emblem S-ICD](#) system is the first and only FDA approved device of its type. “Unlike traditional implantable defibrillators, it does not require leads in the venous system, eliminating potential sources of complications related to such leads or pockets, the most feared being infection,” says Razeen Gopal, cardiac electrophysiologist at the [Cape Town AF Centre](#) located at [Mediclinic Panorama](#), who completed the first series of subcutaneous ICDs in Africa this week.

“It provides a safer alternative to conventional implantable defibrillators, without the complications associated with cardiac wires,” he says.

This is of particular importance in young patients, since the new, subcutaneous device can simply be pulled out and removed. A traditional transvenous system can only be removed during delicate surgery since the wires tend to become submerged and entwined in scar tissue.

The subcutaneous ICD is 83,1mm wide, 69,1mm high and 12,77mm thick, weighs 130g and is implanted in a space between two muscles on the left side of the patient’s body.

Research shows that the device has very low complication rates, and the cost to patients is almost the same as for the transvenous system.

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