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Northern Beaches Hospital: New fast track lung cancer clinic for beaches

A new lung cancer clinic for the northern beaches promises to diagnose patients quicker and offer all their treatments in one place.

Julie Cross, Manly Daily

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Dr Samantha Herath new to Northern Beaches Hospital. Image Matthew Vasilescu

A crack team of specialists at Northern Beaches Hospital has formed a new lung cancer clinic to diagnose patients faster and provide a one-stop shop for treatments.

Dr Samantha Herath, who is one of six respiratory physicians on the team, said the Rapid Access Lung Cancer Clinic was launched four weeks ago and means GPs can now refer both public and private patients directly.

She said the aim is to be able diagnose patients more quickly and for them to have all their treatment from start to finish at the same hospital and by the same team of doctors.



Dr Samantha Herath with a nurse in one of the hospitals operating theatres. Image Matthew Vasilescu.

“It saves the patients from having to go to different hospitals for different procedures and to have to deal with different doctors,” Dr Herath, 44, said.

“It’s all about the patient.

“It’s a very personalised treatment.”

She said as the clinic progresses she hopes the team can expand to include nurses to help support patients.

Dr Herath said it was an exciting time at Northern Beaches Hospital for respiratory physicians with the arrival of new equipment including an Endobronchial Ultrasound Bronchoscopy (EBUS) which helps diagnose different types of lung diseases.

It has a flexible tube with a camera to look at the windpipe and lungs.



Dr Samantha Herath with a nurse holding the new EBUS equipment. Image Matthew Vasilescu

It is used to diagnose different kinds of lung problems, including infections or cancer.

For example, Dr Herath said the \$100,000 piece of equipment allowed doctors to see whether cancer had spread to the centre of the chest, allowing them to determine the best course of action, whether it be surgery or chemotherapy.

She also said it was less invasive than a biopsy via an incision.

Dr Herath moved from Westmead Hospital a month ago and is regarded as a good “steal” for Northern Beaches Hospital.

She has been heavily involved in research and has had many papers published.

She said her research work means the clinic will be able to offer patients treatments not yet available elsewhere as part of future research projects.