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Royal Philips and UZ Leuven, has announced a collaboration to digitize and optimize cancer research through digital pathology. The largest university hospital in Belgium will be the first hospital in the country to deploy the Philips IntelliSite Pathology Solution with the aim, through research, to enable faster and more confident diagnosis of cancer and better treatment for patients.

UZ Leuven examines more than 100,000 tissue samples from more than 5,000 cancer patients each year to provide physicians with clinical context and the most detailed information about the individual's case as possible. Similar to the rest of the world, the number of pathologists in Belgium has decreased significantly while pathology continues to grow more complex. There is a need for innovations that help make the pathology process quicker and more efficient, and facilitate the easy sharing of information between pathologists to improve the process of getting second opinions. UZ Leuven selected the digital pathology solution, developed by Philips, to fulfill this need.

"Digital pathology will significantly change the way we work. With the decreasing number of pathologists and the complex environment in which we function, it is important to work more efficiently," said Prof. Thomas Tousseyn, pathologist at UZ Leuven. He added, "A digital network among fellow pathologists in different hospitals can accelerate the process of second opinions in the diagnosis of rare tumors and improve the quality of diagnosis. Next to this, a digital network allows backup agreements and pathology images can be easily shared during multidisciplinary oncology consultation. Also, it offers the opportunity to create a digital learning platform to train assistants and organizing post-graduate training courses."

The new solution consists of a high-speed scanner and image management system to view and interpret images. By scanning the tissue slides, the pathologist will have direct access to the digital files, and cases can be better distributed among the available pathologists. Smart software can assist the pathologist in examining the tissue. In addition, knowledge and images are easily shared in real-time between hospitals and research institutes around the world, thereby creating a virtual network. This will enable international cooperation between experts and open up opportunities in big data research to

gain a better understanding of the causes and mechanisms of cancer.

"Pathologists play a crucial role in the increasing demand for cancer diagnosis and care. Digital pathology is a promising technology that could contribute to the speed and efficiency of the diagnostic process. Our collaboration with the UZ Leuven, the largest pathology center in Belgium, is an important next step in the exploration of this promising new market for the digitization of pathology," said Mr Cees Smit, director of sales at Philips Digital Pathology Solutions Benelux.

Philips recently announced a collaboration in the field of digital pathology with another renowned hospital, Mt. Sinai Health System in New York, to build a large digital image repository of cancer tissue samples for research and big data analysis.