Convergent Procedure Using Cryoballoon Demonstrates Promise of New Ablation Approach in the Treatment of Persistent Atrial Fibrillation

MORRISVILLE, N.C., Sept. 25, 2014 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- A new ablation approach for the treatment of persistent and longstanding persistent atrial fibrillation (AF) patients was presented earlier this month during the poster sessions at the European Society of Cardiology Congress in Barcelona, Spain. This hybrid approach utilizes a cryoballoon as part of the multidisciplinary Convergent procedure in the treatment of persistent AF patients. AF is estimated to affect 5.9 million people in the U.S., with a majority of patients falling into the difficult-to-treat persistent AF population.

The physician poster highlighted experience using cryoballoon technology (22 of 31 total patients) for the endocardial portion of the Convergent procedure. The poster reported on a cohort that included 23 persistent AF patients; 39% of these patients had a longstanding persistent pattern of AF. Prior treatment with an anti-arrhythmic drug had failed in 96% of patients and 30% of patients had previously failed endocardial ablation. At a mean follow-up of nearly a year, 83% of persistent AF patients were in sinus rhythm while off anti-arrhythmic drugs.

"This new combination of ablation technologies has allowed us to offer new hope to AF patients in whom it has been difficult to maintain sinus rhythm," said Suneet Mittal, MD, Director of Electrophysiology at The Valley Health System of New York and New Jersey, in Ridgewood, NJ. "In this persistent AF population, the Convergent procedure is a good ablation strategy and offers a viable alternative for patients who have previously failed to respond to treatment with anti-arrhythmic drugs and/or pulmonary vein isolation."

The multidisciplinary Convergent procedure is performed as a single procedure in the electrophysiology lab. The epicardial lesions are created first under direct endoscopic visualization by a surgeon, through a 2 cm incision in the abdomen, with no chest incisions or ports. The endocardial lesions created by an electrophysiologist ensure lesion set completeness, and specialized EP mapping and diagnostics provide the "checks and balances" to ensure a comprehensive approach.

Dr. Mittal continued, "Using the cryoballoon with the Convergent procedure represents a proactive, anatomic approach in addressing persistent AF, by directly targeting locations known to harbor AF triggers. The epicardial portion of the Convergent approach is able to electrically silence the heart's posterior wall. The cryoballoon targets the pulmonary vein AF triggers, easily completing the endocardial portion of the Convergent approach. In combination, the procedure represents a comprehensive approach to treat persistent AF patients."

About nContact, Inc.

nContact's mission is to transform the underserved arrhythmia market through the advancement of less invasive ablation alternatives for cardiac arrhythmias. The Company is conducting the CONVERGE IDE
Clinical Trial, the first head-to-head superiority study to evaluate the Convergent Procedure to catheter ablation in persistent atrial fibrillation patients. The Company’s lead technology, Epi-Sense® Coagulation System with VisiTrax®, has CE Mark approval in Europe for the coagulation of cardiac tissue in the treatment of atrial fibrillation and atrial flutter. The Epi-Sense Coagulation System with VisiTrax is indicated for endoscopic coagulation of cardiac tissue in the U.S. nContact was founded in 2005 and is headquartered in Morrisville, North Carolina, USA.

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