

The Russian Revolutionary in Diagnostic Imaging

Ten years ago, Dr. Arkady Stolpner opened the first privately owned magnetic resonance imaging center in Russia. Today, his centers perform 20 percent of MRI exams all over the country. And for ten years now, Arkady Stolpner has placed his trust in Siemens equipment.

Text: **Moritz Gathmann** Photos: **Fabian Weiß**

Driving his car through the pine woods north of St. Petersburg in sunny June weather, Dr. Arkady Stolpner asks his assistant by phone to purchase a ticket for a flight to Kazakhstan next week – the next diagnostic center will be opened there, and Stolpner is taking care of it himself. At the sign “Gamma Knife Center” Stolpner turns right – and we’re at the core of Stolpner’s empire. It is an empire that helped change Russian healthcare.

Stolpner, now in his mid-fifties and a dynamic, friendly man, is a very good example of a Russian self-made man: He began working as a doctor in the eighties, but when Gorbachev’s perestroika made it possible, Stolpner founded the first Russian hospital for traditional Chinese medicine. The turbulences of the nineties put a quick end to the experiment, but by 2003 the times had changed again. It was Sergey Berezin, an old friend and well-known doctor, who proposed to Stolpner to open private magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) diagnostic centers. “Back then, in order to get an MRI diagnosis in one of the state-owned clinics of St. Petersburg, you had to wait four months,” says Stolpner, while sitting in his office in the Gamma-Knife Center, nowadays a diagnostic and treatment facility with 50 beds, radiation oncology, surgery, and chemotherapy departments.

Instinct and Trust


“At that time, the state-owned clinics were totally underequipped, and there were no private diagnostic centers with MRI,” explains Stolpner, “but everybody told us that it would

never work out because of the costs.” Stolpner, however, trusted his instinct and founded the Diagnostic Treatment Centre of the International Institute of Biological Systems (DTC IIBS). And his basic assumption – that there is demand for high-class medical diagnostics that is not being met by the state-dominated medical institutions – proved right. The center bought its first Siemens MRI system and welcomed their first patient in August 2003. In December 2004, Stolpner opened a second center in the nearby town of Tver, and a third center in 2005 in the Siberian city Krasnoyarsk, which is 5,500 kilometers away. “We understood: If we can manage a center that far away, we can do it anywhere in the country,” says Stolpner. Because service is a big issue when you have long distances to go for technicians and spare parts, DTC IIBS trained its own service engineers from the very beginning.

Today, DTC IIBS has 77 diagnostic centers in Russia and also in several neighboring republics such as Ukraine and Armenia, most of them equipped with Siemens ecoline MRI and computed tomography (CT) scanners. ecoline ►



LDC Centre in St. Petersburg is just one of 77 diagnostic centers within Dr. Stolpner’s imaging “empire”.



*“Everybody told
us that it would
never work out
because of the
costs.”*

Dr. Arkady Stolpner,
Founder of the Diagnostic Treatment
Centre of the International Institute of
Biological Systems (DTC IIBS), Russia



1.2 million MRI exams per year prove Stolpner's success – and his doubters wrong.

systems are pre-owned Siemens systems refurbished for their customers worldwide during a complete process of cleaning, disinfection, whole surface painting, customized configurations, performance updates, and the latest hardware and software applications. The refurbishment of Siemens ecoline systems is a comprehensive process that starts with a professional inspection of the system before de-installation at the last customer site and leads, finally, to the start of a completely new life-cycle under expert supervision provided by Siemens.

Stolpner has a "strategic partnership with Siemens," as he puts it. Just this year, he ordered 12 MRI and three CT ecoline systems. "In the field of visualization equipment, Siemens is simply the best," says Stolpner while we're walking through the light-flooded corridor that connects the old part of the clinic with the newly-built PET (positron emission tomography) center. Here, the clinic offers a Siemens BiographCT scanner that helps to localize tumors. It is the long-term perspective, the combination of quality and sustainability that

unites Siemens and Stolpner. "Our relationship has developed over the years to a stage where we trust each other totally," he says.

Stolpner's doctors scan 3,600 patients a day, and with 1.2 million MRI exams per year his centers account for 20 percent of all such exams in Russia. But the core of it is still the clinic in the woods north of St. Petersburg. Upon receiving reports, especially from young doctors from the regions, his most experienced doctors in the consulting center make around 340 assessments a day. If needed, patients are invited for treatment to St. Petersburg. Here, 2,500 patients are treated annually.

Radisurgical Pioneer

Stolpner is proud to be equipped with high-end equipment for radiosurgery and radiation oncology. Several years ago, radiosurgery was not practiced in Russia – simply because there was no equipment. In 2008, DTC IIBS was the second center in Russia equipped with a Gamma Knife. Nowadays, his clinic offers an Accuray CyberKnife®

and – most recently – a True Beam system by Varian.

But Stolpner still sees room for development. He estimates that 100 diagnostic centers should be the limit in Russia, but there are still neighboring countries he could expand to. "In the near future, we plan to open a Gamma Knife center in Novosibirsk to make treatment more convenient for the patients from Siberia," explains Stolpner.

Times are changing, however. Over the last few years, according to Stolpner, the competition has become stronger: "There are other private clinics that offer diagnostics, and the state has been investing a lot in medical equipment since 2008." Yet Stolpner understood from the very beginning: Equipment alone is not enough. An important reason for his success is that DTC IIBS trains doctors how to work with the equipment – over 300 since 2003. Before starting to work with the high-tech equipment that they never saw during their education at state universities, the new employees from the regions come to the St. Petersburg clinic for several months of intensive

Russian Health: Facts & Figures

Total expenditure on health per capita
in US\$ (2011):

1,316

Total expenditure on health
as % of GDP (2011)

6.2

State expenditure on health (2011):

RUB 413 billion

(US\$ 12.73 billion)

State expenditure on health
as % of GDP (2011):

3.7

Medical insurance market (2011)

Compulsory insurance:

RUB 604 billion

(US\$ 18.61 billion)

Private insurance:

RUB 95 billion

(US\$ 2.93 billion)

Market for private medicine (2012):

RUB 500-540 billion

(US\$ 15.41-16.64 billion)

courses certified by the Russian Ministry of Education.

One of them, the 29-year-old neurosurgeon Alexander Kuzmin from the Siberian city Tyumen, has just finished the MRI of a young patient. He has been working at Stolpner's center since 2010. "We have the newest equipment and the newest methods of treatment here," says Kuzmin. This is why he didn't hesitate when he got a proposal from Stolpner while he was just finishing university. Like Kuzmin, most of Stolpner's doctors are between 25 and 40. "Our doctors, especially in the regions, are much sought after by our competitors," says Stolpner. "But they usually stay with us. And we value loyalty."

Another reason for Stolpner's success is the cooperation with the state that is of high importance in a system where healthcare is still dominated by the government. Most citizens still use the mandatory health insurance, although that insurance only gives access to state-owned clinics. That is why 9.5 percent of Stolpner's patients have an additional private health insurance, but 90 percent have to pay themselves. "In the regions, we find mutually beneficial agreements with the authorities," he explains. In the case of St. Petersburg that means that the city pays for the treatment in Stolpner's clinic for certain categories of citizens who cannot afford it themselves.

But Stolpner is hoping to be included in the state health program run by the Ministry of Health. That would make it possible for "normal" people without additional private insurance to be treated at his centers. "The state is investing a lot in its own clinics, but we are convinced that we can work better – and more efficiently," says Stolpner. ■

Moritz Gathmann has been working in Russia since 2008 as a correspondent for various German magazines and newspapers. His articles have appeared in *Der Spiegel*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, among others.

Sources: WHO <http://www.who.int/countries/rus/en/index.html>, Rosstat, http://www.raexpert.ru/researches/publications/dms_2014/, RBC research, http://marketing.rbc.ru/news_research/21/01/2013/56294998553852.shtml

➔ www.siemens.com/ecoline

© 2014 by Siemens AG, Berlin and Munich,
All Rights Reserved

Publisher:

Siemens AG
Healthcare Sector
Henkestrasse 127,
91052 Erlangen, Germany

Responsible for Contents:
Michael Sigmund

Director, Customer Communication:
Silke Schumann

Chief Editor: Tanja Berbalk

Production: Norbert Moser

All at: Henkestrasse 127,
91052 Erlangen, Germany

Phone: +49 9131 84-7529,
Fax: +49 9131 84-4411

email: editor.medicalsolutions.healthcare@
siemens.com

Design and Editorial Consulting:
independent Medien-Design,
Munich, Germany

Art Direction: Horst Moser

Layout: Claudia Diem, Heidi Kral,
Irina Pascenko

Editorial Coordination: Claudia Diem

Photo Editor: Florencia Serrot

All at: Widenmayerstrasse 16,
80538 Munich, Germany

Editorial Consultation, Content and
Journalist Network:
Primafila AG, Hornbachstrasse 50,
8034 Zurich, Switzerland
Viviane Egli, Roman Elsener,
Simon Froehling

Copy Editing:
Sheila Regan, UNIWORKS,
Kirchenstrasse 10,
91054 Erlangen, Germany

PrePress:
Reinhold Weigert, Typographie und mehr ...
Schornbaumstrasse 7,
91052 Erlangen, Germany

Printer: G. Peschke Druckerei GmbH,
Schatzbogen 35,
81829 München, Germany

Note in accordance with section 33 Para.1
of the German Federal Data Protection Law:
Dispatch is made using an address file which
is maintained with the aid of an automated
data processing system.

We remind our readers that when printed,
X-ray films never disclose all the information
content of the original. Artifacts in CT, MR,
ultrasound, and DSA images are recognizable
by their typical features and are generally
distinguishable from existing pathology. As
referenced below, healthcare practitioners
are expected to utilize their own learning,
training, and expertise in evaluating images.

Partial reproduction in printed form of indi-
vidual contributions is permitted, provided
the customary bibliographical data, such as
author's name and title of the contribution as
well as date and pages of Medical Solutions,
are named. The editors request that two
copies be sent to their attention. The consent
of the authors and editors is required for the
complete reprint of an article. Manuscripts
submitted without prior agreement as well
as suggestions, proposals, and information
are always welcome; they will be carefully
assessed and submitted to the editorial con-
ference for attention.

Medical Solutions on the Internet:
www.siemens.com/medical-solutions

DISCLAIMERS: Practice of Medicine: "The information presented in this magazine is for illustration only and is not intended to be relied upon by the reader for instruction as to the practice of medicine. Healthcare practitioners reading this information are reminded that they must use their own learning, training, and expertise in dealing with their individual patients. This material does not substitute for that duty and is not intended by Siemens Healthcare to be used for any purpose in that regard." **Contrast Agents:** "The drugs and doses mentioned herein are consistent with the approved labeling for uses and/or indications of the drug. The treating physician bears the sole responsibility

for the diagnosis and treatment of patients, including drugs and doses prescribed in connection with such use. The Operating Instructions must always be strictly followed when operating your Siemens system. The source for the technical data are the corresponding data sheets." **Trademarks:** "All trademarks mentioned in this document are property of their respective owners." **Results:** "The outcomes achieved by the Siemens customers described herein were achieved in the customer's unique setting. Since there is no "typical" hospital and many variables exist (e.g., hospital size, case mix, level of IT adoption), there can be no guarantee that others will achieve the same results."

On account of certain regional limitations of sales rights and service availability, we cannot guarantee that all products included in this brochure are available through the Siemens sales organization worldwide. Availability and packaging may vary by country and is subject to change without prior notice. Some/All of the features and products described herein may not be available in the United States.

The information in this document contains general technical descriptions of specifications and options as well as standard and optional features which do not always have to be present in individual cases.

Local Contact Information

Asia/Pacific:

Siemens Medical Solutions
Asia Pacific Headquarters
The Siemens Center
60 MacPherson Road
Singapore 348615
Phone: +65 9622-2026

Canada:

Siemens Canada Limited
Healthcare Sector
1550 Appleby Lane
Burlington, ON L7L 6X7
Canada
Phone: +1 905 315-6868

Siemens reserves the right to modify the design, packaging, specifications, and options described herein without prior notice.

Please contact your local Siemens sales representative for the most current information.

Note: Any technical data contained in this document may vary within defined tolerances. Original images always lose a certain amount of detail when reproduced.

Europe/Africa/Middle East:

Siemens AG, Healthcare Sector
Henkestr. 127,
91052 Erlangen
Germany
Phone: +49 9131 84-0

Latin America:

Siemens S.A., Medical Solutions
Avenida de Pte. Julio A. Roca No 516, Piso 7
C1067ABN Buenos Aires
Argentina
Phone: +54 11 4340-8400

USA:

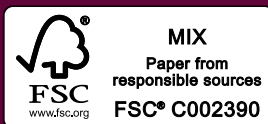
Siemens Medical Solutions USA, Inc.
51 Valley Stream Parkway
Malvern, PA 19355-1406
USA
Phone: +1 888 826-9702

Global Siemens Headquarters

Siemens AG
Wittelsbacherplatz 2
80333 Munich
Germany

Global Siemens Healthcare Headquarters

Siemens AG
Healthcare Sector
Henkestrasse 127
91052 Erlangen
Germany
Phone: +49 9131 84-0
www.siemens.com/healthcare



ClimatePartner°
climate neutral

Print | ID: 53152-1401-1003

Order No. A91CC-00060-M1-7600 | Printed in Germany
CC 1790 021427.0 | ISSN 1614-2535 | © 02.14, Siemens AG

www.siemens.com/medical-solutions