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## 24 PRODUCT REVIEW/PUBLISHING

# Scans instead of liver biopsies

**A**ustralian company Resonance Health has signed an agreement with a US radiology chain for its non-invasive liver diagnostic technology, FerriScan.

The company hopes the agreement will help its expansion into the US market, where it already has agreements with Novartis and a clinical research network specialising in the genetic condition thalassaemia, which causes iron overload.

FerriScan uses magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technology to provide a scan of the liver which is subsequently analysed to quantify iron loading using FerriScan's software. The company says it

is a novel technology easily applied to any MRI machine.

The FerriScan test enables users to gain an accurate measurement of the concentration of iron throughout the liver. The test relies on a marker known as the proton transverse relaxation rate (R2), which is particularly sensitive to iron. A calibration curve that forms part of the FerriScan test enables the transformation of R2 measurements into iron concentrations.

Traditional methods for diagnosing iron overload in the liver involve use of indirect blood markers and the insertion of large bore needle across the abdominal wall into the liver for the removal of a biopsy sample. Resonance Health says neither of these tools are optimal for measurement of iron levels: biopsies are invasive and dangerous, while both methods are inaccurate due to sample size or the indirect nature of the test.

Replacing liver biopsies by scans of sequential cross sections of the liver eliminates both the sampling errors inherent in the biopsy procedure and the risk to the patient associated with gaining access to the liver from outside the body, the company says.

The FerriScan is being used at hospitals including Fremantle and Princess Margaret in WA and the Royal Adelaide.

**For more information,**  
see [www.ferriscan.com](http://www.ferriscan.com)

