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Press Release

HYGEIA: Improved quality of life for patients with pulmonary emphysema

New endoscopic valve-placement technique using a bronchoscope

A new endoscopic valve-placement technique using a bronchoscope has been successfully performed for the first time in Greece at HYGEIA Hospital. The procedure is expected to bring relief to patients suffering from pulmonary emphysema.

Emphysema is a form of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). It is a condition commonly encountered in smokers, mainly over the age of 45. Patients usually experience shortness of breath and recurrent infections, and are very often admitted to hospital.

The procedure was performed on a 64-year-old patient who suffers from pulmonary emphysema, under general anesthesia. **The team of endoscopists included Dr Michalis Doris, Head of HYGEIA's Interventional Pulmonology Department and associate of the 2nd Pulmonary Clinic, and Dr Kosmas Iliadis, Director of HYGEIA's Thoracic Surgery Department.** Three valves were placed to the patient, who has already been discharged, via a flexible bronchoscope, blocking airflow to the right upper lobe of the lung. This way, the air is deflected to the remaining healthy parts of the lungs. This method starts improving respiratory function almost immediately.

As noted by Dr Doris, "We are delighted to have given our patient something that patients in Europe and the USA are already receiving: improved quality of life. Over the last few years, the endoscopic method for treating patients with emphysema is being performed internationally, assisting those people that are inconvenienced daily due to their breathing insufficiency. A surgical approach could be the right solution at times, however, the endoscopic approach is a much more attractive option, which can complement the surgical procedure for treating emphysema."

On his part, Dr Iliadis stated, "This technique can also be performed on patients with chronic air leak from the lung, such as pneumothorax, bronchopleural fistula and postoperative air leak. Besides, the cost of repeated hospitalizations for these patients is often higher than the cost of having the technique performed."