



**AGFA**  
**RADIOLOGY**  
SOLUTIONS

## A stress-free approach to patient-centered care

DR 600 impresses at Emmendingen District Hospital with efficient processes, outstanding image quality, and reduced radiation dose.

## Case study

### Interview with

#### **Dr Ulrich Saueressig**

Head of Radiology and Medical Director of KKH Emmendingen and

#### **Ms. Susanne Mahnkopf-Steffl,**

Chief Radiographer at KKH Emmendingen

Emmendingen District Hospital (KKH), in Emmendingen, Germany, is a 260-bed general hospital that provides a wide range of treatments for acute illnesses. Each year, it cares for some 12,000 inpatients and 28,000 outpatients. The radiology department is equipped with a CT, an MRI, a direct radiography (DR) system, a mobile X-ray system and a digital mammography solution, and performs around 16,000 X-ray exams annually. “Customer orientation is very important to us,” emphasizes Dr Ulrich Saueressig, Head Physician of Radiology and Medical Director of KKH Emmendingen. His ‘customers’ include patients, who need fast, effective treatment, and referring doctors and hospital departments, who require quick and reliable delivery of X-ray images and results. “We can’t afford long waiting times – whether for image creation or follow-up,” says Dr Saueressig.



When Dr Saueressig joined Emmendingen in 2012, the radiology department was transitioning from analog to digital X-ray. Ten years later, it was time to replace what had become an outdated computed radiography (CR) system. “We were never completely satisfied with the old system, including the support,” he says, explaining why customer service was high on the list of decision criteria. For this reason, KKH Emmendingen focused on finding a German provider with a local team. After an intensive selection process, including several on-site visits, Agfa Radiology Solutions’ fully automated DR 600 X-ray room was chosen.

### Functionality and practicality

“During a visit to Agfa’s plant, we took a look at the system and were particularly impressed by its functionality and practicality,” says senior radiographer Susanne Mahnkopf-Steffl. “The new software and the option to upgrade the device at a later date were also key advantages.”

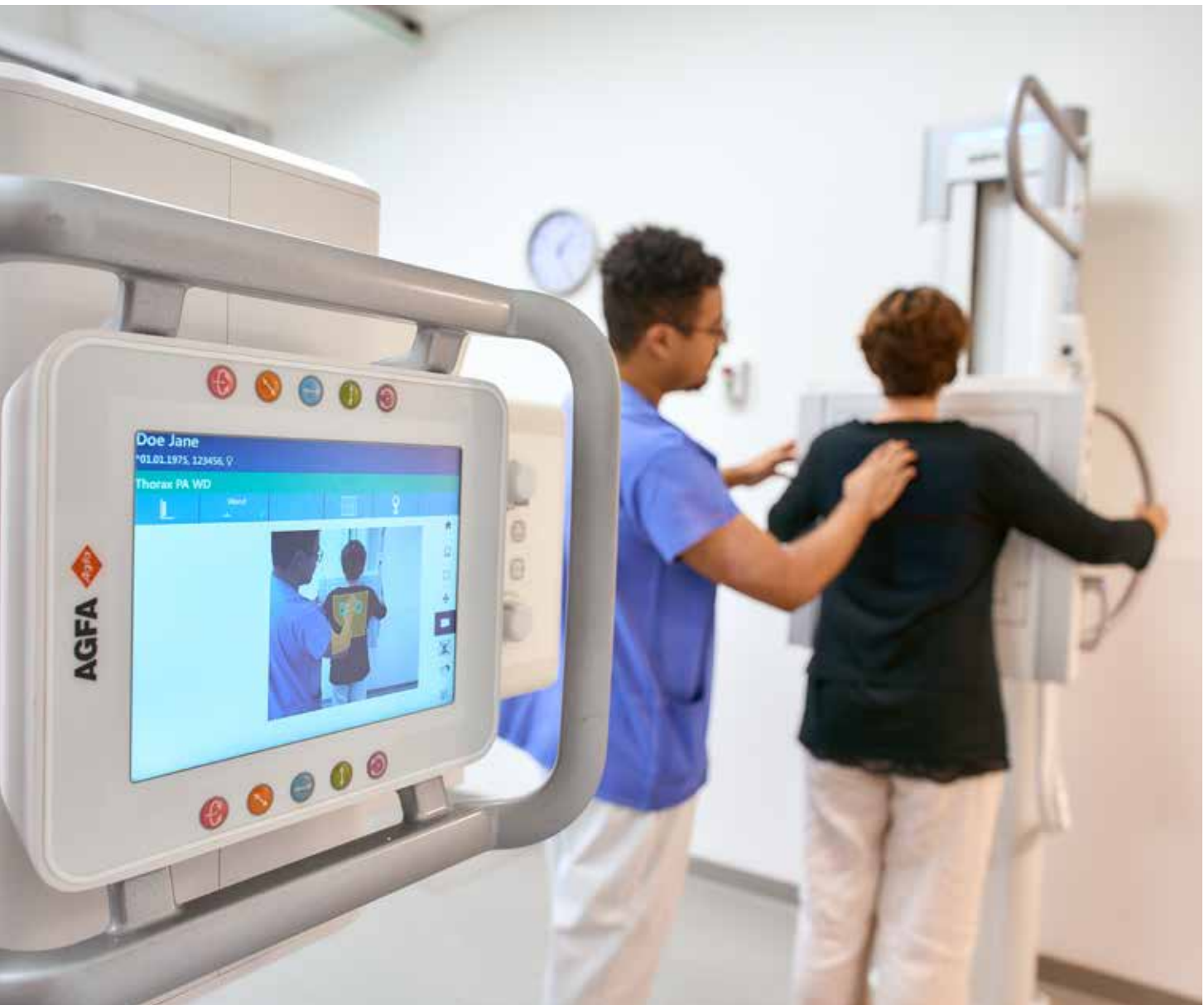
The DR 600 met another important selection criterion as well: it is a fully automated DR system. “The job of radiographer is physically demanding, so we want to make the work as easy and comfortable as possible. Our X-ray modalities have to support both operator and patient comfort. The DR 600 makes this possible.”



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**Dr Ulrich Saueressig**

Head of Radiology and Medical Director of KKH Emmendingen



### **Smooth installation and workflow**

After the contract was signed, installation of the new system began. First, the room had to be planned and remodeled to enable modern workflows.

Agfa provided support throughout this process, including for the implementation, application training and basic user training. The radiographers themselves were responsible for the changeover to the new, fully digital working method.

“Our senior colleagues struggled at first with the switch from the old X-ray tube system to digital operation,” says Mahnkopf. “But after a short familiarization phase, they quickly accepted the DR 600, especially once they saw how the fully automatic X-ray room significantly reduces their physical strain. The younger team members who joined us straight after their training, on the other hand, are quite enthusiastic because they are familiar with digital systems and we can offer them a smooth workflow.”



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**Susanne Mahnkopf-Steffl,**

Chief Radiographer at KKH Emmendingen

### **Automation streamlines radiographer workflow**

The radiography workflow remains essentially unchanged. The hospital wards request X-ray exams via the hospital information system (HIS), and the requests appear in the radiology information system (RIS). The patient’s arrival in the radiology department is registered in the RIS and their data is automatically transferred to the worklist of the DR 600 workstation.

“When I select the patient there, I see all the parameters for the relevant exam,” explains Mahnkopf. These parameters, such as dose values and exposure, have been defined in advance by the radiographer and radiologist so no adjustments are needed. Furthermore, the automatic exposure system detects the body region or organ and adjusts the exposure parameters, including optimizing settings for large-sized patients, for example.

The radiographer positions the X-ray tube before the patient enters the X-ray room. “It’s fully automatic and takes a lot of physical strain off us,”

Mahnkopf says with satisfaction.

The remote control enables every radiographer, regardless of stature, to effortlessly adjust the height. According to Mahnkopf, these features directly benefit care quality, as eliminating manual interventions allows more time to be spent with the patient. “We can be more attentive to them, take more time to explain the procedures, and help ease any fear or nervousness they may have about the exam.”

The rotating Bucky under the table is another asset. “With other devices, I have to remove and manually flip the detector to switch between a landscape and portrait image. With the DR 600, I press a button and can easily rotate the detector in the Bucky as needed,” explains Mahnkopf. The integrated camera has also proven highly helpful. Aligned in the direction of the beam, it ensures the radiographer receives the live image both on the DR 600 and on the workstation. “We always have a clear view of our patients and can intervene quickly if needed, which can be very convenient with elderly patients or those with cognitive impairment,” says Mahnkopf.



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**Ms. Susanne Mahnkopf-Steffl**



### **High image quality enables dose reduction**

Dr Saueressig particularly highlights the image quality of the DR 600: “When I look at the X-ray image, I no longer have to window or make any further adjustments. I immediately have a good overview to analyze the images, which supports reliable diagnosis.” He notes that the image quality is particularly evident in difficult situations such as supine chest imaging. Even when we are working with very challenging patients, the images are of high quality, enabling dose reduction without the loss of image quality. “Furthermore, the MUSICA® image processing software enables additional dose reduction,” Dr Saueressig says.

In the future, he would like to establish a closed loop in the radiology department – similar to those in medication management – to help prevent patient treatment errors. “For example, in cases where the wrong patient is brought in from the ward or we have a patient who can’t express themselves well. That’s where I want to start, to build a digital workflow around the patient,” Dr Saueressig explains his plan. Agfa has already laid the foundations for this, for example enabling the implementation of a barcode scanner that allows the information on the patient’s wrist or at the patient’s bedside to be captured by the system and compared with the worklist. The correct patient is then automatically selected from the worklist and the exam started.





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Dr Ulrich Saueressig

## Clinic



With 700 employees, including 270 nursing staff and 100 doctors, the Emmendingen district hospital is the healthcare center for the region. Offering the latest technology and expertise, its specialized departments offer a comprehensive range of interdisciplinary medical services. As a center for basic and standard care, the district hospital has 263 beds. Around 12,000 inpatients are treated each year, in addition to approximately 28,000 outpatients from the district and the region.

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