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## **New software to measure blood pressure more accurately**



A new software has been developed, that is said to measure blood pressure more accurately.

Developed by HealthSTATS International, the software is hooked up to a watch-like device to measure blood pressure at the root of the aorta, the largest artery in the body.

*Lin Jiamei reports.*

The traditional method of measuring blood pressure requires you to slap a cuff around your arm, inflate the device and a minute later, your blood pressure is shown.

This measures the pressure from the artery in the upper arm, which experts say is not the most accurate method to date.

A more accurate reading will emerge if you measure the blood pressure from the root of your largest artery, the aorta, instead.

The new software aims to do just that, by recording the pulse waves from the patient's wrist, through a watch like device.

Chief Executive Officer of HealthSTATS International, Dr Ting Choong Meng, explains how it works.

" The watch is able to do two things one is to capture the 24 hour blood pressure. But if you were to wear it for five minutes, what it does is, you connect it to the cable the USB port to the computer and our software gives you a real time recording of a block of waveform and by looking at the wave forms, immediately you get the central pressure and other indices that tell you how stiff your arteries are. "

A recent study done in the UK lends weight to this method of recording blood pressure.

Professor Bryan Williams from the University of Leicester School of Medicine was involved in this study done in 2006.

He describes the new software as a ' breakthrough' in the way blood pressure would be measured in the

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future.

" We showed that although the two different drugs look like they are doing exactly the same thing when the blood pressure was measured by the doctors in the patient's arm, when we use our technology to estimate the central pressure, that is the pressure in the aorta closest to the heart, there were quite significant differences between the responses to the drugs. The breakthrough here is that by simply acquiring data from the pulse at the wrist we can actually accurately measure the pressure near the heart and we think that it is going to be a better predictor of risks for people with high blood pressure."

Costing around \$6,000, the software and the watch like device have attained the US Food and Drug Administration or FDA's approval within a record breaking 45 days.

It is now being tried out in several public hospitals in Singapore.