

Curiosity over “Needle-less and Pain-free” Blood Test Saved This Doctor’s Life

Patient Testimonial – John Viljoen, M.D.

A random request to be tested by Masimo’s noninvasive total hemoglobin monitoring technology allowed for the early detection of Dr. Viljoen’s esophageal cancer, leading to early intervention that he credits with saving his life.

Last year, Dr. John Viljoen, a clinical professor of anesthesiology at Loma Linda University School of Medicine in California, walked into his office to find it cluttered with computers and testing equipment that were being used in a clinical study for Masimo’s new noninvasive total hemoglobin monitoring technology. Skeptical about the ability to measure hemoglobin without drawing a blood sample, Dr. Viljoen commented, “that will never work.” Still, curiosity got the best of him as he matter-of-factly asked one of the technicians to “stick one of those sensors on me.” That one simple request kicked off a chain of events that Dr. Viljoen credits with saving his life.

Dr. Viljoen, who had exhibited no prior symptoms, received a low hemoglobin measurement of 10.6 from the noninvasive hemoglobin device and had the results validated by a laboratory blood test. He then had a series of additional tests to identify the source of his anemia, which ultimately led to a diagnosis of esophageal cancer that had metastasized in the upper part of his left arm. Dr. Viljoen underwent surgery to remove the tumor in his esophagus and replace his left shoulder.

Masimo’s new noninvasive total hemoglobin monitoring technology is a needle-less and pain-free way to perform a common blood test. This technology helps doctors measure a patient’s hemoglobin levels without removing a drop of blood, and provides immediate results. Low hemoglobin levels can indicate chronic or acute anemia, which can be due to a diet deficiency, or blood loss due to an illness, such as cancer.

“If it were not for that procedure, I would have had to wait for symptoms of the cancer to occur, at which time it would probably have been inoperable and the whole sequence of events would have been totally different – resulting in all probability of my not being here today,” Dr. Viljoen asserts.

“My life expectancy has been totally changed as a result of that random assessment of noninvasive total hemoglobin.”

Masimo’s noninvasive total hemoglobin monitoring technology provided Dr. Viljoen with immediate, on-the-spot results that facilitated the early detection that typically has required more invasive measures. For the first time, a new needle-less test takes the pain and wait out of a commonly performed blood test—making it safer, faster, and easier than ever for health care professionals to measure a patient’s hemoglobin levels on-the-spot, in just seconds.



Today, Dr. Viljoen is cancer-free, healthy and actively leading a normal life. He is enjoying a wonderful retirement full of activities he enjoys, like playing golf.