LEADING THE WAY: Professor David Lurie with the scanner at Aberdeen University which is '100 times better' than current technology

New hi-tech scanner wins patient's praise

Technology: Stroke victim tests device hailed as better than MRI

BY BEN HENDRY

An Aberdeen man is one of the first people in the world to undergo tests in a new body scanner which, it is claimed, is "100 times better" at diagnosing patients than MRI machines.

Richard Johnston "jumped at the opportunity" to act as a guinea pig for the "fast field cycling" device pioneered at Aberdeen University.

Yesterday, he described the "flashing" sensation in his head as he was scanned by researchers less than 24 hours after suffering a mild stroke.

The 81-year-old lost the feeling down his left side at home last month and his wife called an ambulance to rush him to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

A medical researcher then asked Mr Johnston to take part in the scanner project while he was being treated in the acute stroke ward. He said: "Going head-first into a tube can be claustrophobic, but the chap who developed it showed me around the machine and it was very interesting."

> **"Showed me around machine and it was very interesting"**

Mr Johnston conceded that the prototype device had not been modified to make it patient-friendly.

But he made the most of the unique experience offered by the 30-minute procedure. He said: "It sounded like somebody thumping a table as these radio signals were sent out.

"And each time there was a thump, I got a flash of light. It was not in my eyes, but inside my head, though it wasn't unpleasant."

When the procedure concluded, he was able to see the scans of his brain and identify the parts which had been affected by the stroke. Mr Johnston explained that, as a retired lecturer in botany, he already had an interest in the research. He spent four nights at hospital, but is now on the mend.

From left, Dr James Ross, Dr Lionel Broche, Mary Joan and Professor David Lurie are behind the research

Aberdeen University described the scans as a "milestone". MRI scanners use a large magnet, along with pulses of radiowaves, to create pictures of a patient's anatomy. But the new version is able to extract much more information by modifying the strength of the magnetic field during the scanning procedure.