

# MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

The Bulletin of the Medical Technology Group

Issue 17 • September 2008

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## What is the Medical Technology Group?

MTG is a coalition of patient groups and research charities, as well as developers and manufacturers of medical technologies. With a wide range of members—from Arthritis Care and Heart Research UK to international companies such as Boston Scientific and Medtronic—MTG is interested in a variety of clinical areas yet has a common objective in securing patient access to the best diagnostic, imaging, surgical and supported living technology.

## MTG Parliamentary Showcase

**MTG held its Annual Parliamentary Showcase in Westminster on 23 June. As in previous years, the Showcase gave parliamentarians the opportunity to examine some of the technologies that are key to driving up the quality of care provided to patients.**

MPs and peers valued the chance to talk to those involved in the research and development (R&D) of medical technologies, as well as to patient groups who shared the impact these technologies have on individual patients' lives.

Both successes and challenges of the medical technology arena were conveyed to attendees: a strong heritage of R&D and innovation in this country is hampered by instances of low uptake, even when technologies can be financially and clinically beneficial.

All of the MPs and peers present found the event interesting and enlightening, both as an opportunity to engage directly with patients and industry, and to learn more about MTG's current priorities.

Attendees left with tangible examples of how medical technology can improve patient care and, at the same time, deliver savings to the NHS.

John Grogan MP, who kindly sponsored the event, said: "The Showcase provided a chance for MPs to learn more about some of the technological advances in patient care and the NHS. I know it opened the eyes of many of my colleagues to what is now possible in medical care."

We look forward to an equally successful event next year and hope to see you there.



**From top to bottom:** ① John Grogan MP (event sponsor) ② Lord McColl and Baroness Masham with representatives from Lindsay Leg Club ③ Dr Ian Gibson MP with representatives from Boston Scientific ④ Representatives from CR Bard with a High Density Mesh Ablator used to treat Atrial Fibrillation.

## ABHI members get new med-tech Code of Business Practice

A new Code of Business Practice (CoBP) for the medical technology industry is now in force. The CoBP requires all ABHI members to comply with certain ethical standards which are now expected of all businesses. Adherence to a recognised CoBP is also expected to become a prerequisite for doing business with NHS bodies and other purchasers of medical technology in the UK.

Unlike in many other countries where governments have imposed regulation, the UK government encourages industry to self-regulate. In response, ABHI has adopted the Eucomed Code of Business Practice [LINK]. Areas specifically covered in the CoBP include: Quality and Regulatory Compliance; Interactions with Health Care Professionals; and Advertising and Promotion. This entered into force on 1 April 2008.

However, the CoBP will only be fully effective if the majority of the industry signs up, so plans are being developed to accommodate non-ABHI members soon. Non-ABHI members will, however, be charged to join.



[www.abhi.org.uk/multimedia/docs/regulation/cop.pdf](http://www.abhi.org.uk/multimedia/docs/regulation/cop.pdf)

# Staying ahead – A pioneering NHS

by the Department of Health

**The NHS Next Stage Review led by eminent surgeon and health minister Lord Darzi concluded in June 2008 with the publication of *High Quality Care for All*. This report sets out ways in which the NHS can improve: by giving patients and the public more choice; by staff working in partnership with key stakeholders including industry; and by delivering high quality care to all users of services.**

Lord Darzi wants to ensure that innovation is central to the NHS and the report emphasises that accepting, embracing and leading change is an imperative and not an option.

*High Quality Care for All* describes a pioneering NHS which can harness the benefits of innovation for continuous improvement. Although there has been a substantial amount of recent government activity around innovation, the report sets out new ways to improve.

The Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) will have a new legal duty to promote innovation through the creation of a new regional fund. The funds will be used to identify, grow and diffuse innovation. An independent expert panel will assess local applications and award prizes.

There will be new prizes for innovations that directly benefit patients and the public. This will foster an enterprise and innovation culture within the NHS. The prizes will be designed to engage a wide range of NHS staff and will be focused on tackling some of the major health challenges such as radical breakthroughs in the prevention and treatment of lifestyle diseases. Prizes will not be awarded unless there is clear evidence that value—either financial or health gain—will be delivered.

The DH is already working with industry to explore ways to simplify the pathway by which new medical technologies pass from development into wider use, and to develop ways to benchmark and monitor uptake. New measures will ensure that clinically and cost effective innovation in medical technologies (including medicines) are adopted.

New partnerships will be forged between key stakeholders, including the medical technology sector. These relationships will enable pioneering



Lord Darzi

new treatments and models of care to be developed and delivered to patients. The DH already has good working relationships with the medical technology industry and it was actively engaged in developing some of the outputs of Lord Darzi's final report in the NHS Next Stage Review.

### MTG view on the Next Stage Review:

- MTG notes the new legal duty for SHAs to support frontline innovation through the creation of new regional innovation funds.
- MTG welcomes proposals for a NHS Constitution and the principle of instilling patients' rights within it. In particular we welcome the draft proposal to enshrine patients' right to treatments recommended by NICE.
- MTG also welcomes the creation of NHS Evidence as an incentive to improve innovation. We hope this new portal will help to differentiate between the nature of evidence suitable for assessing medical technologies from that used for pharmaceuticals.
- MTG concurs with the view that technology plays a key role in the treatment and management of long term conditions.
- The NHS has to be more proactive in the uptake of medical technology and fully understand the potential cost savings technology can generate through increased clinical efficiency and productivity, as well as the wider societal benefits.
- More needs to be done in promoting self-management of some simple diagnostic procedures within a regulated framework.

# Healthy Legs for Life

by The Lindsay  
Leg Club

**Today we must recognise the dynamic and changing nature of our technological society, and the general public's expectation and need for preventative health promotion and education. Continual Leg Club health promotion initiatives have seeded the community with excellence in practice and ensured that widely differing groups have been given access to Well Leg management, from motorcyclists to expectant mothers.**

The second national *Healthy Legs for Life* week commences on Sunday 28th September, and aims to raise the public's understanding of the importance of looking after their legs.

The events will include local awareness days, a two day national conference, media coverage, public presentations and the distribution of educational *Healthy Legs for Life* materials.

All the activities are designed to raise knowledge amongst the general public of preventative care relating to all aspects of lower limb disease and to ensure that all socio-economic groups are given access to 'well leg' management.



www.legclub.org

# Great Comebacks™ 2008

by Convatec

**Great Comebacks™ recognises the achievements of people who prevail over debilitating intestinal diseases, colorectal cancer and stoma surgery and provides inspiration to other people who have experienced these and similar conditions and interventions.**

Great Comebacks™ has been running for seven years in the UK. The programme, a support network for ostomates everywhere, has been extended and broadened this year. Individuals are invited to tell how surgery has affected their lives and how they continue to lead a full life. The aim is to recognise and celebrate these people and their stories.

The Annual Great Comebacks® Award ceremony is planned in London at the end of January 2009. The awards celebrate ostomates' achievements in seven different categories: Colostomy, Ileostomy, Urostomy, Young person, Carer, Nurse and an overall winner. The Prince's Foundation for Integrated Health supports the Young Person's Award and the RCN & WCET support the Nurse's award.  
[www.greatcomebacks.com/uk/programs/index.shtml](http://www.greatcomebacks.com/uk/programs/index.shtml)

# Technology Showcase: New Heart Blanket

by Heart Research UK

**Pioneering treatment for heart disease has reached an exciting stage which could mean benefits to thousands of patients as well as huge savings for the NHS.**

Scientists at Leeds University, funded for the last six years by Heart Research UK, are at a crucial stage in the development of an innovative artificial heart muscle that helps the heart to beat. The technology, made of a web of special material positioned around the heart, has sensors that recognise when the heart wants to beat, triggering a series of miniature motors to make the web contract, helping the heart push blood around the body.

The device has been tested on a mechanical model of the heart and once mechanics perfect variables such as timing and length of squeeze, the team will simulate the effects of different heart diseases to gauge the potential uses for the device. This means the heart can be aided without major intrusive heart surgery or the need for a transplant.

Barbara Harpham, National Director at Heart Research UK said: "Heart disease is on the increase and, in particular, heart failure is a growing problem. This very debilitating disease will be a growing burden on the NHS, especially for palliative care. Anything that saves the NHS money must be worth pursuing, especially if it brings along with it major benefits to patients."



Heart Blanket

*"This technology will be an important development in the treatment of heart disease and in cases where, currently, the only long term treatment is transplantation. It could radically reduce the cost of surgery and after care."*

*"This is a truly amazing new technology that could benefit thousands and save a massive amount of money for the NHS, not to mention the heartache for families and patients. It's great that it is being developed here in the UK and funded by a UK charity."*

**Medical Technology  
Group members**

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- [Association of British  
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- [Transplant Support Network](#)
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# Telehealth Technologies

**The field of Telehealth is borne out of advances in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) - such as the Internet, telephone lines, and video-conferencing - and the need to provide healthcare professionals and patients with more efficient healthcare services.**

It is therefore a joint effort by all healthcare professionals, and the medical technology and ICT industries, to exchange information for diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease. The objective is to find better and more cost-effective solutions to manage health conditions and improve lives.

Potentially, the use of this technology could significantly expand as it offers a new way of meeting many of the growing challenges in healthcare, for instance, an ageing population. As demand for health and social services will rise along with healthcare costs, intelligent telehealth solutions could help contain these costs.

Today, eHealth and particularly telehealth appear to be promising tools to better manage people with long term conditions and improve the quality of life of elderly people living at home. This technology not only eases the burden on such patients, but also speeds up diagnosis and therapeutic care delivery for emergencies and allows primary healthcare to give continuous assistance in geographically dispersed areas.

A good example of telehealth in use is in the field of cardiology. Increasingly complex medical devices are being implanted into patients' hearts, where they are used to regulate the heartbeat. These range from pacemakers to implantable cardiac defibrillators (ICDs) and cardiac resynchronisation therapy (CRT) devices.

ICDs sense when the heart has developed dangerous ventricular arrhythmia and deliver a high voltage shock to restore a normal beat. CRT devices are sophisticated pacemakers which provide constant support to the beating heart. Where telehealth comes in is when devices like these have miniature antennae which enable them to share information from within



the patient's heart to, for instance, a doctor. This monitoring, which can assess the health of the device as well as of the patient, can be carried out remotely. Benefits include: quicker and more accurate information; less travel and inconvenience for the patient; and more time freed up for the clinician.

Nevertheless, there are barriers that affect implementation of telehealth, and the potential of telemonitoring of cardiac implants remains only partially realised. According to the European Commission, these barriers include:

- Market fragmentation and lack of interoperability
- Lack of legal certainty
- Insufficient availability of financial support
- Procurement issues
- Data protection and privacy

In the UK, these issues could be dealt with by the Health Innovation Council (HIC) as telehealth is certainly a very innovative way to provide convenient care closer to home. For example, NHS North West was quoted in Lord Darzi's Next Stage Review as making specialist knowledge more available locally through the use of cardiac telehealth in GP practices. This is another confirmation that the government is serious in the uptake of this technology.