

Press release: 30 October 2006

Revolutionary new fabric with friction coefficient of ice will alleviate suffering

A Surrey company has developed revolutionary new products that will vastly improve the quality of life of those suffering from serious skin conditions and those bed-ridden through long-term illness.

APA Parafricta Ltd has developed a fabric, called Parafricta Fabric, which has a friction coefficient close to that of ice yet the strength of steel.

Parafricta Fabric has already been hailed as a technological break-through, with Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children using the fabric for those suffering with Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB), a crippling skin disease highlighted in Channel 4's programme *The Boy Whose Skin Fell Off*.

Parafricta Fabric is also displayed in the Science Museum's 'Challenge of Materials' gallery and is a 'fabric of the future'.

George Sampson, APA Parafricta chief executive officer, said: "Parafricta Fabric is unique in that its friction coefficient is like ice. The fabric does not jerk or snatch when one surface, such as skin, begins to move against another (a process called 'stiction'), which is often the cause of problems for those suffering with serious skin conditions and the cause of bedsores suffered by the long-term bed-ridden."

APA Parafricta has begun to develop a range of garments that can be used by sufferers that include pillowcases, fitted bed-sheets, booties and under-garments.

Jackie Denyer, an Epidermolysis Bullosa nurse consultant working for the charity DeBRA (www.debra.org.uk) and based at Great Ormond Street, is looking at options to use Parafricta Fabric in clothing and accessories designed to limit the trauma to EB sufferers.

Denyer said: "The Parafricta Fabric is a true breakthrough for those suffering from EB and other serious skin conditions. It is comfortable, feeling a little like silk, and allows the skin to heal by eliminating friction and shearing forces – something traditional fabrics cannot bring."

Jane Edwards, a clinical nurse specialising in tissue viability at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS Trust, adds: "The fabric reduces friction and shear forces and allows heel

and sacrum dressings to stay in place for longer. This reduces dressing changes and allows for effective wound management. The booties were found to keep heel dressings in place on immobile patients and allowed the dressing to be changed when appropriate and not because it had rucked up and/or come off. I believe this fabric to be a breakthrough in the prevention of skin breakdown."

The Parafricta Fabric can also easily be washed at high temperatures without altering its characteristics in any way.

Sampson adds: "Bed sores cost the NHS more than £1 billion each year extending a patient's hospital stay by anything up to 25 weeks. The Parafricta Fabric garments help bedsores heal much quicker by protecting the wound dressings in place from being dislodged and provide much greater levels of comfort for those suffering. If the garments are used in at-risk patients to help avoid potential pressure sores, we believe Parafricta Fabric will save the NHS many millions of pounds."

Details on Parafricta Fabric garments are available at www.parafricta.com

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Notes for editors:

The cost of bed sores to the NHS is sourced from 'Bennett G, Dealey C, Posnett J (2004) *The cost of pressure ulcers in the UK*; NICE, September 2005, Cost-impact report: Clinical Guideline 29 Pressure Ulcer Management'.

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