

Flushing toilet takes medical prize

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Public sanitation, including the flushing toilet, was picked as the greatest medical breakthrough since 1840 in an international poll released in London.

Antibiotics received the second-highest number of votes in the British Medical Journal Poll of 11,000 respondents, The Times of London reported.

Medical professionals picked anesthesia as most important, The Times said.

But Adam Hart-Davis, author and host of the BBC series "What the Victorians Did for Us," told The Times that sanitation deserved to win.

"Contamination of drinking water is still the single biggest killer in the world and it always has been," he said. "As such, the humble lavatory is the greatest device ever invented in medical history."

The winner was announced at an awards ceremony in London, where doctors and scientists praised each medical milestone. Other contenders for the prize included DNA and vaccines.

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