

Breakthrough to take the pain out of catheters

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A new pharmaceutical product that could significantly improve quality of life for catheter users all over the world is to be developed by Queen's University Belfast after it won a national award.

'Uroglide' is a new coating for catheters that aims to make insertion easier, less painful and with reduced risk of inflammation or infection. There are currently 26,000 intermittent [catheter](#) users in the UK - patients who insert and remove disposable catheters themselves, between four and eight times per day.

Aimed at the global healthcare market, including the USA's estimated 300,000 intermittent catheter users, Uroglide-coated catheters are currently undergoing independent testing and could be available both on the NHS and privately by next year.

The Uroglide technology was developed by Professor Colin McCoy, from Queen's University's School of Pharmacy, and Dr Nicola Irwin, the key scientist for the project. Dr Irwin was one of just seven national winners of the Royal Academy of Engineering's Enterprise fellowships, which gives academics £85,000 each to develop their research into viable commercial products.

Professor Colin McCoy, from the School of Pharmacy at Queen's University Belfast said: "For patients with poor control over their bladders, intermittent self-catheterisation - which involves the regular insertion of catheters into the bladder via the urethra - has become the

norm. This is largely due to the lower infection risk and greater personal independence associated with them. In fact, over 600 million of this type of catheter are now sold globally each year. Regular insertion of poorly lubricated catheters, however, is painful and can lead to difficult-to-treat urethral complications, such as damage, bleeding and inflammation. The coatings that are currently used dry out quickly and they've changed very little in over a decade.

"With our team at Queen's and support from Invest Northern Ireland, we developed a new coating that's cheaper than the industry standard, yet stays wet for longer, is more slippery, and adheres strongly to the catheter. By easing insertion and removal, it should improve the patient's experience and make a life-changing difference to their dignity and health.

Dr Nicola Irwin, from the School of Pharmacy at Queen's University Belfast, said: "Winning this fellowship is very exciting as it gives us 12 months of funding, mentoring and training to develop our research into a spin-out company. Our technology has already been externally validated by a team of world-renowned entrepreneurs and provides a key example of how Queen's research is being exported from the laboratory to the global marketplace and making an impact on society."

Professor David Woolfson, Head of the School of Pharmacy at Queen's University Belfast, said: "I am delighted to congratulate Dr Irwin on obtaining this prestigious Fellowship award. Together with Professor McCoy, the team leader, their work is a prime example of the School's commitment to bring the benefits of world class pharmaceutical research to patients. It further illustrates why Queen's University has been placed in the top 10 in the UK for research intensity in the recent Research Excellence Framework."

Provided by Queen's University Belfast

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