

Quicker And Safer Way Of Attaching The Tubes That Hospital Patients Have Going Into Them

Dr Marc Spinoza, who lives in Cuffley, Herts, and is a paediatrician at Great Ormond Street children's hospital in London, has just achieved a breakthrough in getting his ingenious invention approved for use in hospitals throughout Europe.

Marc Spinoza's patented invention is a quicker and safer way of attaching the tubes that hospital patients have going into them. It has already been tested successfully and approved for use in British hospitals. Having just won the approval of the European CE Mark, his BRAIDLOCK invention can now be used throughout Europe - a vast market of over 500 million.

The BRAIDLOCK is a short, braided sleeve that tubes (or 'lines') go through. It is attached to the patient by two small sutures, by an integral adhesive patch or by a Velcro tape. It's easy to push a tube through the BRAIDLOCK into the patient, but very hard indeed for it to be pulled back out unintentionally. If the line does need to be adjusted, the doctor or nurse simply squeezes the device lightly and the tube can be moved easily, without having to remove or redo sutures or sticking plaster.

Marc Spinoza's inspiration for his invention was a children's toy: the Chinese finger trap - a braided tube that allows a child to push a finger into it only to discover that no amount of tugging will get the finger out

As a young doctor with a family, Marc had to remortgage his house to raise the money he needed to develop his invention, get it patented and approved for use in hospitals. "Yes, I would do it again, but it's been a hard journey with many surprising obstacles," he says. "Fortunately, I had enough business sense to get my invention patented. Securing the services of a firm of patent attorneys was one of the best decisions I made. Their advice has helped me to raise more capital and negotiate successfully with potential investors."

Trials were carried out at Great Ormond Street, Hillingdon and Addenbrooke's hospitals. Around 90 per cent of those who tried the device said they wanted to continue using it. Doctors hailed it as simple, effective, safe and likely to save the NHS both waste and cost.

With an estimated market of 60 million lines a year in the UK alone, even a small reduction in the waste resulting from lines that have to be replaced will lead to valuable savings for the NHS. This is particularly good news for budget holders who are increasingly under pressure from current market conditions to reduce spending.

"And it doesn't stop there," Marc enthuses. "With more help from Mathys and Squire, my patent attorneys, I've applied to patent the braided tube technology for use in a range of other non-medical ways - including as a swimming flotation aid for children."