

BREASTFEEDING

A simple nipple shield that prevents HIV transmission from a breast-feeding mother to her child has been devised by a Cambridge University engineer.

Stephen Gerrard, a chemical engineer, has helped devise the shield that can disinfect milk as it leaves the breast.



The device uses a detergent used by biochemists to denature proteins for analysis.

A layer of cotton-wool soaked in the chemical is added to a conventional shield and this deactivates the virus.

The layer deals with the virus without having to go through heat treatment which is the normal treatment to deactivate the HIV virus.

The International Design Development Summit (IDDS) in the United States brought together engineers and field workers to work on research projects aimed at developing prototype designs.

Non-toxic solution

Mr Gerrard, together with a team of five others, was assigned the task of creating a practical design for heating breast milk to deactivate the virus.

"We quickly established this may be too lengthy a process for many women in developing countries so they

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MEGA TRUST

Our local Queen Elizabeth Hospital, serving a diverse and expanding population it covers the boroughs of Greenwich, Bexley and beyond. agreed on Monday to the proposed merger with Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup and the Princess Royal Hospital in Bromley. This is expected to help them, with a joint budget of £400,000,000, to compete with larger London hospitals to attract specialist work and highly trained staff. If the Queen Mary, the last of the 3 to decide, joins the final go-ahead will have to be ratified by Secretary of State, Alan Johnson.

Cont

might not have the time for it," he said.

"Research has shown that copper and copper compounds can work but another approach, carried out by a group at Drexel University seemed more promising.

"Their research has focused on sodium dodecyl sulphate (SDS), which can kill the HIV virus quickly and in fairly non-toxic concentrations."

Their project could also have benefits beyond prevention of HIV.

"We were concerned that using our nipple shield could be stigmatizing, since it would identify a mother as HIV infected," said Mr Gerrard.

"We're considering marketing it as a way to deliver medicines or micronutrient supplements to aid breast feeding. For example, they can also be used for iron or iodine deficiency."

EDITORIAL



Hi Folks!

The snow fell deeply, traffic ground to a halt, children made snowmen enjoying the rare event in London and Heathrow cancelled all flights on 2nd February. The minicab office told me they were going to charge me £100-double fare-to take me to Heathrow the following day. I considered this to be unjustified as the roads were good and the traffic was light. Instead I drove to Southall and booked a room at the Red Lion Inn for £30. At six o'clock on the following morning I paid £11 for a minicab to Heathrow to catch my flight to Thailand.

I spent the next fortnight in Bangkok & Hua Hin basking in 37°C and getting a suntan while exploring the country on a rented motorcycle with my Thai friend Odds.

All these good things came to an end when, out on my own, my bike slid on gravel and collapsed onto my right leg. My foot and knee were badly bruised and after establishing that I hadn't broken any bones I drove with a lot of pain back to my hotel. 24 hours later my foot had swollen and my knee was enormous. I phoned to Odds, told him of my disaster and I was unable to walk. He said he'd come and tend to me as soon as he finished work. He arrived at seven o'clock that evening.

I decided to go to the hospital to have my leg x-rayed as the injury appeared worse than I'd first thought. Odds took me to the hospital. I was examined x-rayed, then the doctor told me there was no breakages or fractures but the pain and swelling was the result of very severe bruising and sprain. He then asked me questions about my health, what medication I was taking and my past medical history. I am fortunate in that I was able to tell him the names of my medication and the previous injuries and surgical operations I had undergone. He asked if I was allergic to any drugs and I told him, "Yes carbamazepine brings me out in a red and itchy rash."

"You certainly keep yourself well-informed." he told me. "Most of my patients don't know the names of their medication and remember little precise detail of their medical history."

I laughed remembering how when I'd been in Guys hospital many patients I'd spoken to only knew the colour of their drugs and would say "I need one of the pink ones nurse" and were unaware of their names or side-effects. Thinking about this I waited for my medicine and decided that I would bring it up in our next newsletter.

To help guarantee the best possible medical care experts say everyone should maintain their own personal medical record. The reason is, it's just not true that important medical information is likely to be

MEDICAL RECORD

complete and always readily available. We're often asked about our medication and many are unable to give this information expecting it to be available in the records of the person asking the questions. Frequently they don't have all this information.

Patients should gather the information themselves, it can assist in an emergency and help them to become more proactive in their own health care. There are two reasons for keeping records of your Healthcare.

1. That your information may be the only information available at a very important moment, as happened in Thailand.
2. It actually gets people much more engaged and able to ask further questions.

Doctors say that people should carry every day, information on serious medical conditions, medicines being taken and known reactions to medicines and allergies. Alternatively make it available on a website then you need only remember of its location. It's not always possible to look at medical records in a crisis or in the case of an accident. Many people receive care from different doctors in different places over time, another reason a personal medical record is a good idea is that people are mobile, they change doctors and dentists.

The first step in compiling a complete personal medical record is knowing what information to include in it. The basics are: names and phone numbers of doctors and consultants, lab results, details of illnesses, injuries, surgeries, treatments and allergies. It's important to keep it in one place, and that it's accessible. That someone close to you or who who lives with you knows where it is and can find it. It can be a simple **notebook** or **folder**, a computer program or website are options too, password protected to protect your privacy. For people that are comfortable with this method it can be a terrific way to do it. The simple inexpensive **15Mb Flash Drive** will hold all the information you need and it's no bigger than a key fob carried on your key ring ready to plug into a USB port on any computer.



In light of the NHS Informatics Review's findings that proven, existing systems will play an increasingly important role in the National Programme for IT. Formic Fusion for Healthcare is in constant use by over 200 NHS Trusts, PCTs, Mental Health Trusts, Strategic Health Authorities and Health Boards across the UK, Ireland and South Africa.

There are a growing array of programs and electronic information programs whilst far from commonplace also provide data for personal medical records. The future will likely bring better and automatic systems but experts say even then patients will have to work hard to know and understand their personal medical records. The quality of our medical care depends on our personal medical portal. The ultimate purpose of having personal medical information is so that you are fully aware.

Jain

HARBOURSAFE

The  **harbour trust** has provided services for people affected by HIV and AIDS as part of its charity based services for over 10 years. Recently it formed the HarbourSafe programme.

HarbourSafe deals specifically with the needs of the black minority and ethnic (BME) community, and black gay and bisexual men. It hopes to develop and sustain a peer mentoring programme in the BME community which will help its members remain HIV negative.

The programme itself is based on the highly successful model of the MetroSafe programme started in 2006 by the Metro Centre in Greenwich, which introduced the idea of peering mentors with mentees from the gay community with similar backgrounds to claim ownership of their sexual behaviour, practices and commitment to staying HIV negative. Similarly HarbourSafe hopes to duplicate this success by pairing mentors and mentees from an ethnic background to face the challenges that their cultural beliefs, society and indeed safer sex can present.

By recruiting black gay and bisexual men from the community who are confident in their approach to safer sex practices (mentors) HarbourSafe strives to team them with individuals who have found it difficult to maintain their own commitment to staying HIV negative (mentees). In an effort to help them build self esteem and knowledge of themselves it gives mentors and mentees the opportunity to work through nine goal building modules that put control and ownership of their lives and sexual behaviour firmly back into the hands of participants.

As the HarbourSafe Coordinator one of my roles is to recruit volunteers into the programme and provide them with the necessary training and support they will require in order to achieve

HARBOURSAFE

their desired goals and outcomes. Another equally important role will be strengthening ties between already existing BME organisations and providing points of referrals into the programme.

The rise and spread of HIV is continuing and it is through community support based programmes such as HarbourSafe that we have an opportunity and a commitment to fight back.

Rory Goring - HarbourSafe Coordinator.

UNSAFE SEX

New UK teen pregnancy rates show rise for the first time in 5 years wrote AVERT, an international AIDS charity, on 26th February 2009

The number of teenage pregnancies in England and Wales has risen for the first time since 2002 according to new government statistics for 2007.

The government had set a 10-year target of halving the rate of pregnancies by 2010. The new figures appear to have setback any chance of this being achieved. Rates for under-16 conceptions are actually back on the same level as they were in 2000. Despite this, rates overall, for all under-18 conceptions have been falling each year since 2002.

Sex education in the UK has expanded in the last 10 years though and an emphasis on relationships as well as the biological facts could be reflected in this gradual decline.

The most recent figures however are worrying and suggest more still needs to be done in educating young people about sex, relationships and contraception. The government now needs to ensure they provide comprehensive sexual health education along with accessible contraceptive services so that young people are able to equip themselves with the knowledge and protection they need.

CRISIS HELP!

The economic crisis means the **harbour trust** is now facing huge challenges. That's why we appeal for extra funds. We've already had to cut services. If we do not raise extra money we face having to make further cuts to our services and activities in 2009.

Vulnerable people including children will be put at risk. We simply cannot let this happen. As families feel the pinch, many can no longer find the extra money to support us. At the same time, we know that when recession strikes, children get hurt. Research shows that economic stress is often linked to domestic violence and child abuse and a lack of responsible sexual behaviour.

That's why we urgently need to secure extra funding. Please find a friend, colleague, employer or anyone to show this letter from us asking you to give a one-off donation to support our appeal. Please do your best to put something in the post. Thank you for your support in these difficult times.



METRO 50+ IS A SOCIAL GROUP FOR OLDER LESBIAN, GAY AND BISEXUAL PEOPLE

WEEKLY MIXED DROP-IN

A mixed weekly drop-in run each Thursday between 1 and 4pm offers a space to socialise with others in a comfortable, non-judgemental, relaxed atmosphere. It's a safe place where if you feel like you need a confidential chat, staff are available for a one to one session in one of the counselling rooms.

There is no obligation to stay for the entire session and you can come along for however long you want.

WORKSHOPS & GROUPS

The Metro Centre periodically runs workshops and groups covering a range of issues such as 'Sexuality', 'Intimacy', 'Loss', 'Isolation', 'Stress & Anxiety' and 'Self Esteem'.

Details of forthcoming workshops and groups may be obtainable from

Email: info@metrocentreonline.org
or their website at
http://www.metrocentreonline.org/whats_new.htm

INFORMATION

where to find out more about hiv

- <http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/Greenwich/HealthSocialCare/HealthMatters/HIVAIDS/VoluntarySectorServices/HarbourTrustContact.htm> The Harbour Trust is a community HIV charity which supports people living with HIV/AIDS, their carers and families.
- <http://www.metrocentreonline.org/services.htm> 110-114 Norman Road SE10 9JQ The Metro Centre aims to work with self-identified lesbian/gay/bisexual people.
- <http://www.thepositiveplace.org.uk/> 52 Deptford Broadway Deptford SE8 4PH The Positive Place exists to respond to the needs of people who Live in South London & are affected by HIV and AIDS
- i-Base Treatment Phonenumber. An HIV Treatment phonenumber where you can discuss your issues with a treatment expert. 0808 8006 013
- Visit www.aidsmap.com for the latest news about HIV & AIDS and a fully searchable treatments database and a complete list of UK treatment centres
- <http://www.cwac.org/index.htm> Children with AIDS Charity. Specialist Paediatric HIV Service in St Mary's Hospital in Paddington, London.
- <http://www.gaylawyers.co.uk/Default.aspx> Our understanding lawyers will make you feel as comfortable as possible when contacting us with your legal issues.



You know how much you enjoyed it last year and raised money for us at **harbour trust**. Please call us, we need team members and of course sponsors (details below) or visit

<http://www.walkforlife.co.uk/>

to register for this year's walk.

Every one is welcome! It's a sociable event so come with friends or meet people on the day, and there'll be free entertainment at the main event village.

Whilst the walk is only 10km, the difference made will go so much further dramatically improving the lives of people affected by HIV and AIDS in the UK and internationally.

H A R B O U R T R U S T

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