

Press release

Göteborg, July 13, 2006

Astra Tech Wins Technology and Leadership Award for Innovative LoFric® Catheters

Astra Tech's pioneering work in the field of urology was recognized this week (12 July) when it received the 2006 Technology Innovation and Leadership of the Year Award from international business consultants Frost and Sullivan.

The Swedish medical devices company, a subsidiary of AstraZeneca, is a world leader in the fast-growing field of intermittent catheterisation and its contribution to improved treatment standards for patients was key to winning this prestigious international accolade.

By making intermittent self-catheterisation a convenient, clean and safe process through its innovative LoFric® hydrophilic product, Astra Tech has "improved the quality of life of users by reducing the trauma and complications that were once associated with this procedure," says the Award citation.

The world's first hydrophilic catheter was introduced by Astra Tech in 1983, giving users the freedom of self-administered intermittent treatment, and since then a wide range of LoFric catheters has been developed, all using Urotonic™ Surface Technology to reduce friction and minimize the risk of inflammation. Astra Tech is now a clear market leader, accounting for more than 40 per cent of the intermittent catheter segment.

"Product innovation, technology excellence, extensive documentation, on-going long-term studies and significant support and training have all resulted in a product that customers perceive as being synonymous with reliability, safety and convenience," adds the citation.

In conferring its 2006 Technology Innovation and Leadership awards, Frost and Sullivan evaluated Astra Tech's performance across all stages of the technology life cycle, including incubation, adaptation, take-up and maturity, to ensure a continuous flow of improvements.

Professor Gerard Amarenco of Rothschild University Hospital, Paris, a leading expert in the treatment of urinary dysfunction, has been prescribing LoFric catheters for 15 years. He has carried out a pan-European study among 425 disabled patients suffering from severe spinal and neurological conditions that make intermittent self-catheterisation a necessity. On entry into the study, a variety of different catheters were being used, including conventional PVC, non-hydrophilic products. After a two-week evaluation of the latest LoFric Primo catheter, about half said they preferred it and would continue to use it. Amongst those using non-hydrophilic products, 75% favoured LoFric®Primo™.

"Astra Tech were first to develop the hydrophilic catheter and there's no doubt their product is still one of the best on the market," says Professor Amarenco. "Over the years, the company has continued to improve and refine the technology and their work has made a valuable contribution to improving the quality of life of patients. This award is well deserved."

Astra Tech President and CEO Peter Selley says: "We are very proud and pleased to win this award from such a respected organization as Frost and Sullivan. It recognizes the effective research and development work of our company which benefits both patients and professionals in the healthcare sector."

"Our policy is to continue improving the existing LoFric product line and we plan to introduce further developments in the future."

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***Astra Tech AB** is a subsidiary of the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca and, develops and produces dental implants and advanced medical devices. With these products, Astra Tech aims to improve treatment results, facilitate procedures, reduce health care costs and enhance the quality of life for patients. Its headquarters, located in Mölndal, near Gothenburg, Sweden, house facilities for research and development as well as production. The company, with approximately 1,700 employees, has 15 subsidiaries in Europe, North America and Asia/Pacific and is represented by local partners in other selected markets. Sales last year totalled SEK 2.3 billion.*

***Frost & Sullivan** is a global growth consulting company and has been partnering with clients to support the development of innovative strategies for more than 40 years. The company's industry expertise integrates growth consulting, growth partnership services and corporate management training to identify and develop opportunities. Frost & Sullivan serves an extensive clientele that includes Global 1000 companies, emerging companies and the investment community, by providing comprehensive industry coverage that reflects a unique global perspective and combines ongoing analysis of markets, technologies, econometrics, and demographics.*

Background Information

LoFric: Everyone Deserves the Best

LoFric® is the most widely researched and clinically documented urethral catheter available today. It was introduced in 1983 as the first hydrophilic catheter and remains the superior product for clean intermittent catheterisation (CIC). It offers reliability, safety and an improved quality of life for users.

The current LoFric range includes an extensive selection of catheters to suit men, women and children. These products, such as the new LoFric Primo, are also available with accessory kits and each is designed to help with different situations in daily life – for example, when patients have no direct access to clean water or a toilet. Special products are also available for the instillation of drugs into the bladder, and for dilatation of the urethra.

Before LoFric

Until the introduction of LoFric, un-coated catheters were the only products available for intermittent self-catheterisation (ISC). Gel had to be applied to the surface of the catheter in order to protect the urethra, but this procedure often proved inadequate because the gel tended to rub off during use. It was also sticky and messy to apply. As a result, common problems associated with ISC involved damage to the urethra and subsequent infections, as well as pain and discomfort for the patient.

Secrets of LoFric

The LoFric catheter has a unique, hydrophilic outer layer, which is designed to reduce friction between the urethra and the catheter during ISC. This feature minimizes the risk of discomfort, trauma and possible health complications, such as urinary tract infections.

The expression 'hydrophilic' refers to the LoFric catheter's ability to attract and retain water. Its surface consists of salt and PVP (polyvinylpyrrolidone), a completely harmless and non-allergenic substance. When immersed in water the reaction of the PVP creates a fluid outer layer, which greatly reduces friction.

Once the PVP has attracted water, the LoFric catheter's unique Urotonic™ surface technology is then able to bind it because the salt content of the catheter's surface is the same as found in urine. This allows the LoFric catheter to slide in - and out - easily without the need for any other form of lubrication, providing a surface that is significantly lower in friction than that of a gel-coated catheter.

Latest development: LoFric Primo

LoFric Primo now adds convenience to user safety and long-term health. A water sachet is added to the LoFric catheter in a compact package that remains flexible so that it fits easily into a pocket or small bag.

LoFric Primo makes life easier for everyone who uses catheters. For example, when patients have no access to water or a toilet. It combines the benefits of the world's best-documented catheter with a package that is simple and convenient to use, while at the same time safeguarding user safety and long-term health.

Well documented

The documentation for intermittent catheterisation using the LoFric catheter is both more extensive and longer term than for any other catheter on the market.

Long-term studies are vital because injuries associated with ISC may take several years to become apparent. All studies of the LoFric catheters have produced very good results, especially those over a long period of time up to ten years. Comparative studies using ordinary catheters with gel tell a very different story. For patients using these catheters, urethral strictures and inflammations are common.

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Astra Tech: Thinking Globally and Acting Locally

Astra Tech AB is a medical devices company that develops, manufactures and sells leading-edge healthcare products in the fields of urology, odontology and surgery.

A subsidiary of the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, Astra Tech is headquartered at Mölndal, near Gothenburg, Sweden, where it has research, development and production facilities. As an independent company, it retains the flexibility of a small business, while simultaneously having access to AstraZeneca's considerable resources and experience in the field of research, as well as those disciplines connected with legal, environmental and patent issues.

The company's business philosophy is 'to think globally and act locally' by closely monitoring every development in healthcare. In this way, it is fully equipped to achieve all its goals in a constantly changing market.

Since its establishment in the late 1940's, Astra Tech has grown rapidly, becoming a market leader by focusing on well-defined business areas. Its success has been achieved through intensive research programs and comprehensive quality initiatives, implementing the very latest production methods and professional marketing systems.

LoFric®, Astra Tech's world leading and innovative range of hydrophilic urinary catheters, is a prime example of how medical research can be integrated with the engineering of modern materials to create a platform to meet ever-increasing demands from the healthcare sector. Astra Tech's products, based on documented, long-term clinical research, give healthcare providers added medical, practical and financial value while fulfilling patients' expectations of good health and an excellent quality of life.

Today, Astra Tech has subsidiaries in more than 15 countries in Europe, North America, Japan and Australia and is represented by local partners in other selected markets. It has approximately 1,700 employees, including 900 in Sweden. Posted revenue for 2005 was SEK 2.3 billion.