

Vet: tissue-vaporising tool has 'revolutionised' surgery

A BRITISH vet is extolling the virtues of what he believes is "the future of soft tissue veterinary surgery".

Julian Hoad is thought to be one of two vets in the UK using a new surgical tool that harnesses Airplasma technology to vaporise tissue without touching it.

Dr Hoad, head of Crossways Veterinary Group in West Sussex, said the device – called Onemytis (pictured) – results in minimal blood loss and tissue damage; creates better healing surfaces with faster recovery times; and has reduced surgery time for some procedures, from 30 minutes to 5 minutes, while affording a greater degree of precision than anything he has used in 20 years as a surgeon.

Dr Hoad, who has no financial links to the Onemytis technology, said: "I don't think I'm overstating it to say this is the future of soft tissue veterinary surgery. It's brilliant."

Onemytis uses the new Airplasma technology, which works by gas – in this case, air – ionisation.

Air is passed through a strong electromagnetic field generated safely using a high voltage/low current energy source. This releases energy (plasma), which can vaporise

report by

David Woodmansey

davidwoodmansey@vbd.co.uk
01733 383561

tissue at low temperatures.

It operates at a maximum temperature of 50°C as opposed to temperatures of more than 118°C reached in conventional electrosurgery.

During surgery, the electrode does not touch the patient. Plasma is formed when it is between 1mm and 2mm away from the tissue, depending on the power setting.

This means the surgeon does not apply any pressure when creating an incision, further increasing the precision with which the device can be used.

The technology was developed in Italy and is used widely in mainland Europe – particularly for ear, nose and throat procedures; ophthalmology; dermatology; and many oncological procedures.

Instant seal

One of the biggest advantages of the technology, said Dr Hoad, is its ability to instantly seal any incision, keeping blood loss to an absolute minimum.

Dr Hoad, who has been using the technology for almost 18 months, said: "The precision of cutting is far in advance of other electrosurgical units I've used over the past 20 years."

"It has absolutely excellent haemostasis potential and gives you a much better surgical feel when you're operating – especially when you're handling very soft and delicate tissues."

"It also comes into its own when you're dealing with patients that might not be otherwise very stable."

"As an example, I did a splenectomy from a dog that was really quite anaemic, and decided to use a combination of the Onemytis and a technique called LigaSure. Not only was the surgery very quick, but I lost less than 10ml of blood – a negligible amount."

Dr Hoad said he now used the equipment "pretty much routinely" for nares widening in brachycephalic dogs.

He said: "Again, the fact the haemostasis is so good, you can visualise the tissues a lot more easily. You can do more precise cutting and remove a larger amount of nasal tissue safely."

"It also drastically cuts down surgery time. I'd typically spend around half an hour on this procedure – now, surgery

time is around five minutes. It makes a huge difference."

Dr Hoad continued: "Normally, I would have used a scalpel and then I'd have to wait until I'd pressed the bleeding for long enough for it to stop, and then go in as quick as I can with sutures, but with this technology, there is no waiting, because there's virtually no blood."

"It's kind of revolutionised it – and I don't think I'm overstating the point here."

Efficient

Another area Onemytis is said to excel in is the quick and efficient removals of small lumps, nodes and skin tags – sometimes without the need to sedate a patient, and merely employing a local anaesthetic instead.

The precision of the device is key to its success, said Dr Hoad. He explained: "I recently removed an enlarged lymph

node. The mass was around the mesenteric root. Because Onemytis is so precise, I was able to dissect around the blood vessels, removing tissue that was attached to them with no blood loss."

"Onemytis is also excellent for removing epulides. It cuts through gingival tissue with very limited burning and produces very good, pain-free healing."

"I also did my first scalpel-free GUF [genito-urinary function] resection in 22 years – from start-to-finish with no scalpel needed."

Asked if he believed fellow vets might benefit from the technology in terms of improved precision and time saved in surgery, he said: "Yes, definitely, absolutely."

"This is a very exciting new tool with a huge range of applications and that range is growing rapidly – I think I've only scratched the surface of my use with it so far."



Image: Excel Lasers

More than 80,000 sign BSL petition

BLUE Cross has handed in a 80,000-plus signature petition to Downing Street calling for breed-specific legislation (BSL) to be repealed.

BSL (Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act) bans four types of dog based on physical appearance alone. Behaviour and genetics are not taken into account.

In delivering the petition (on 28 February), the national pet charity was joined by MP Angela Smith, who has supported the Blue Cross campaign to repeal BSL.

Charity officials also carried images of cross-breed dog Duncan (pictured inset), which Blue Cross was legally forced to euthanise under

the BSL legislation, even though the charity believed he could have gone on to safely live a happy life in a new home.

Mrs Smith said: "I am delighted to support the Blue Cross campaign to end BSL. For too long we have relied on out-of-date legislation that focuses purely on the appearance of dogs rather than their behaviour."

"This is clearly ineffective, as exemplified by the high number of attacks on children and vulnerable workers, such as those in the postal service."

"This is why Blue Cross and I are calling on the Government to repeal Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act and introduce measures that focus, rightly, on the deed, rather than the breed."



From left: Becky Thwaites, Blue Cross head of public affairs; Richard Woodward, Blue Cross public affairs assistant; Amanda Marrington, London welfare officer at Blue Cross; Steve Goody, Blue Cross deputy chief executive; and MP Angela Smith.

RCVS reveals 2019 election candidates

THE RCVS has announced the candidates standing in the 2019 council elections and confirmed the two members of VN council who were nominated this year.

Nine candidates are standing in this year's RCVS council election, including five existing members eligible for re-election and four candidates not on council.

The candidates are: Linda Belton, Niall Connell, John C Davies, Joanna (Jo) Dyer, Timothy (Tim) Greet, John Innes, Thomas (Tom) Lonsdale, Katherine (Kate) Richards and Peter Robinson.

Following a Legislative Reform Order that changed the size and composition of council, three elected places will be available for the candidates, as opposed to six in the years prior to the governance changes.

No election for VN council will take place as two candidates – VN council vice-chairman Liz Cox and newcomer Jane Davidson – stood for the two available places for elected members.

Ballot papers and candidates' details for the RCVS council election are due to be posted and emailed to all veterinary surgeons eligible to vote during the week commencing 25 March.

All votes must be cast – either online or by post – by 5pm on 26 April. Biographies and statements for each candidate in the election are available at www.rcvs.org.uk/vetvote19

'Quiz the candidates'

The college is also once again inviting profession members to "quiz the candidates" by putting their questions directly to the candidates. Each candidate will be invited to choose two questions to answer from all those received and produce a video recording of their answers.

Recordings will be published on the RCVS website and YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos) the week the election begins. Vets could email their question to vetvote19@rcvs.org.uk or send it to the college's Twitter account @theRCVS using the hashtag #vetvote19 by 4 March.

In brief

■ **SHELTER EXPERIENCE:** Vet students are gaining hands-on experience of shelter medicine thanks to a partnership between the University of Nottingham and RSPCA Raddcliffe Animal Centre. The final-year students at the university's School of Veterinary Medicine and Science are being given the chance to treat cats, dogs and rabbits coming into the centre under the close supervision of its resident vet. The placement offers them valuable skills in dealing with animals that have received little or no veterinary care in the past and often arrive at the shelter in an extremely poor condition.

■ **AWARDS MILESTONE:** CVS Group small animal practice Raddenstiles Veterinary Surgery in Exmouth has achieved CVS' 100th Practice Standard Award, leading the way among corporate groups in the number of awards achieved. Other recent CVS practice award achievers are Claremont Veterinary Group in Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, which received "outstanding" for the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme's Client Service Award; Alver Veterinary Group in Hampshire; and Valley Veterinary Group in Scotland.

■ **WILD ANIMAL CONFERENCE:** Booking is still open for the Wild Animal Welfare Committee Conference in Edinburgh on 27 March. Focusing on guardianship of wild animal welfare in the UK, the event will open with a keynote presentation from Donald Broom, emeritus professor of animal welfare at the University of Cambridge, on "Wild animal welfare, sentience and law: international perspectives". Tickets cost £65 – visit <https://bit.ly/2Tep8H9>. A few student places are also left, priced at £40 – email wildanimalwelfarecommittee@gmail.com for more information.

■ **SWINE FEVER TEST:** Boehringer Ingelheim and GNA Biosolutions have entered into a research collaboration focused on developing a rapid African swine fever (ASF) diagnostic test. The test would be used in combination with GNA's portable molecular diagnostic platform, and is aimed at supporting the fight against worldwide spread of the deadly disease. It is unclear how far ASF will spread, jeopardising many countries' pig trade and supplies. Due to ASF outbreaks, more than 600,000 pigs were culled within the past few months in China alone.

Got a story? Contact the Veterinary Times news desk

■ **Senior reporter:**
David Woodmansey
01733 383561
davidwoodmansey@vbd.co.uk

■ **Reporter:**
Holly Kernot 01733 383562
hollykernot@vbd.co.uk

■ **News editor:**
James Westgate 01733 383547
jameswestgate@vbd.co.uk

■ **Editor:**
Paul Imrie 01733 383554
paulimrie@vbd.co.uk