

PLATINUM IS A LIFE-SAVING TREATMENT FOR ANEURYSMS

Platinum's applications continue to grow and evolve. After 30 years of use in treating aneurysms, a new more flexible application of the precious metal now updates this technology, further improving outcomes for sufferers

US firm Johnson and Johnson's medical devices subsidiary Cerenovus has introduced a new generation of its platinum-based Galaxy coil range, which has – since 2015 – successfully cut the risk of aneurysms rupturing.

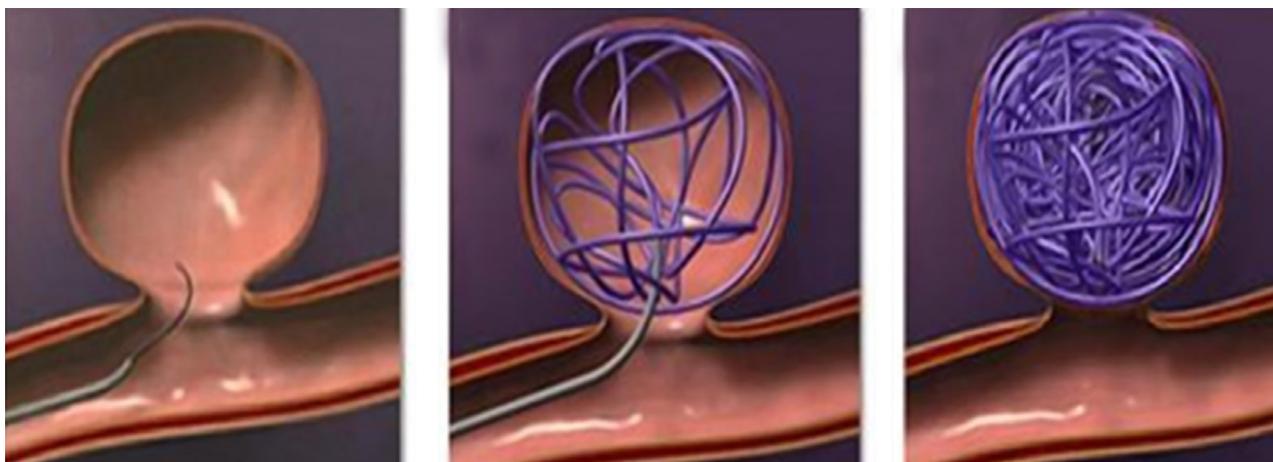
New coil holds the key to better treatment

Platinum plays a key role in many areas of healthcare on account of being one of very few materials suitable for use and implantation in the human body. It is inert, biocompatible, highly conductive, radio opaque and hugely resistant to corrosion. It is used in pacemakers, stents and keyhole surgery. One of the most innovative uses of platinum

is in the treatment of aneurysms, a balloon-like swelling that weakens the artery wall (they can often look like a berry hanging on a stem).

Aneurysms can occur anywhere in the body, including the brain where surgery is both difficult and risky. They are prone to leaking and rupture and, if untreated, aneurysms can burst and cause life-threatening haemorrhaging.

In a procedure called aneurysm embolisation or endovascular coiling, platinum coils are fed into the body via a catheter; platinum's visibility under x-ray is key to the success of this procedure. Upon reaching the site of the swelling, the coils are used



How platinum coils treat an aneurysm: displacing blood and forming a permanent seal. Image: Johnson Matthey

to fill-up the aneurysm, causing the blood inside it to clot and form a permanent seal, reducing rupture risk.

Endovascular coiling is minimally invasive and remains the most effective way to treat the condition without surgery. However, there is a risk that patients will require retreatment. This year, Cerenovus introduced a more flexible platinum coil - as thin as a human hair - that achieves a higher packing density and better halts blood flow to the aneurysm to further cut patient retreatment rates.

Growing sources of platinum demand

Platinum is one of the most useful materials in medical technology and treatment. Its applications range from hip and cardiac implants to cancer treatments and neurological devices used to treat brain conditions such as Parkinson's disease.

Platinum demand from medical and industrial applications continues to grow as it plays key roles in addressing many of humanity's challenges. Along with luxury goods and jewellery, platinum can also function as an investment asset in a private pension or investment portfolio.

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