



PLATINUM ON THE FRONTLINE

Platinum Group Metals, including platinum, are being used by healthworkers in the fight against COVID-19

Platinum's role in combating some of the most serious health issues facing the world was well established even before the current global healthcare crisis brought about by the spread of COVID-19.

From cardiovascular disease to cancer, platinum has for decades provided modern medicine with tried and tested treatment solutions and it remains at the forefront of medical innovation.

For example, pacemakers and stents contain platinum components due to the metal's electroconductivity and biocompatibility, meaning it is well tolerated by the body and unlikely to cause an allergic reaction.

It is also used in a new technique for the treatment of strokes and aneurysms which relies on platinum stretched into long thin wires to retrieve blood clots under X-ray. This is possible because of platinum's radiopacity, meaning it is easily visible during the procedure, giving surgeons better-than-ever monitoring and control capabilities during the retrieval process.

Platinum has been used in the treatment of cancer for over forty years. The chemotherapy medication Cisplatin, known as the 'penicillin' of

cancer drugs, has revolutionised the treatment of many cancer diagnoses and remains as critically important now as when it was first discovered.

Platinum and COVID-19

Today, platinum, together with some of its sister Platinum Group Metals (PGMs), is more relevant than ever as it joins the fight against COVID-19.

Platinum is the material of choice for electrodes in blood gas analysers due to its fast response and reduced measurement error compared with other electrode options.

Instruments that read blood gas composition are proving vital as a diagnostic tool for healthcare professionals treating the virus as they help to screen, diagnose and monitor patients suffering from respiratory compromise. They can be used across a wide range of settings from emergency medicine and critical care to dialysis units or the laboratory.

Platinum catalysts in the chemical sector are also playing their part and are involved in the manufacture of both polypropylene and medical-grade silicones for sought-after personal protective equipment (PPE) and other disposable

medical products. PGM catalysts are also used in the production of many active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), including antibiotics used in the treatment of some COVID-19 patients. An API is the biologically active component of a pharmaceutical product.

It is not only medical settings that are benefiting from the use of PGMs. Electrochlorination systems are being deployed in Italy, China, Japan and Singapore to produce sodium hypochlorite for disinfecting surfaces including those in buildings and public areas as part of efforts to beat the virus.

The PGMs iridium and ruthenium are important catalysts used in these systems to produce chlorine.



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