

Press release
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A cooperation between industry and healthcare for a non-toxic Life+

Do you want a PVC-free blood bag?

Blood bags for red blood cells currently contain a substance that is classified as reproductive disruptor and there is no acceptable alternative on the market.

A new 4-year project, PVCfreeBloodBag, which is funded by the EU's Life+ programme, will try to change this. The project will be launched at a Kick Off seminar in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 7 and 8 of February 2012.

“This project has two objectives: to show that it is possible to make a PVC-free blood bag that fulfils the requirements specification and to increase demand from healthcare organizations,” says project manager Lena Stigh, from the Jegrelius Institute for Applied Green Chemistry, part of the Regional Council of Jämtland, in Sweden.

Jegrelius is working with four European companies and the Karolinska University Hospital. The companies who are participating in the project are: Melitek A/S, Denmark; Wipak Oy, Finland; Totax Plastics A/S, Denmark and Haemotronic Advanced Medical Technologies SpA, Italy. They represent different links in the supply chain for the new bag. Karolinska University Hospital is responsible for evaluating the bag.

“During this seminar the background of the project will be presented and it will also include topical presentations and lectures with a focus on why and how PVC should be removed from healthcare. This seminar is also an important start in establishing collaborations towards less hazardous substances in healthcare.

In order to increase the demand for a PVC-free blood bag, the project has a petition that supporters can sign. The petition is on the project's website: www.pvcfreebloodbag.eu

At the seminar, Associate Professor Hans Gulliksson, Karolinska University Hospital, will talk about the situation in transfusion medicine. Raul Carlson PhD, eco2win, will present a life cycle assessment of the PVC bag, and Dr Gavin Ten Tusscher, Westfriesgasthuis, will address the matter of phasing out PVC from healthcare. The companies involved within the project will also present themselves.

More information is available on the project's website www.pvcfreebloodbag.eu

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WHY NEW BAGS?

Blood bags that are 30–40 per cent DEHP are used in healthcare throughout the world. DEHP is classified as a reproductive toxin and is forbidden in toys. The latest directive regarding medical devices emphasizes the importance of labelling devices that contain DEHP and evaluating the risks of using DEHP in devices for sensitive groups. Demanding a PVC-free bag entails avoiding risks with other plasticizers as well as the global environmental problems caused by PVC.