



PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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Encircle® Compression Therapy Wins Silver Medical Design Excellence Award

Christchurch, New Zealand (28 July 2011) — **Encircle® Medical Devices (part of The Merino Company)** was recently honored with the Silver Medical Design Excellence Award (MDEA) for their Encircle Compression Therapy products providing compression therapy for the lower limb. The 2011 MDEA Winners Ceremony was held June 8, 2011 in conjunction with the Medical Design & Manufacturing (MD&M) East Conference and Exposition (www.MDMEast.com) in New York City's Jacob K. Javits Convention Center.

The encircle devices introduce a patented two-layer design providing the wide ranging natural benefits of merino wool in the next-to-skin area plus state-of-the-art compression for below-the-knee venous disorder treatment.. The sock-like garments are composed of an innovative proprietary material made up of three fibers. The first is the merino, which is composed of keratin, (also found in the outer layer of the human skin) and the second, Thermocool, is an advanced warming and cooling polyester which can channel out moisture from the skin as well as warm when conditions require, thus enhancing the natural characteristics of merino. The third fiber is elastane, which provides high levels of continued elasticity.



Fig. 1 Innovative, multi-purpose compression garments

The compression garments, were developed for The Merino Company (TMC) by Locus Research, who partnered with the AgResearch Textiles Group and the Medical Research Institute of New Zealand. The project was co-funded and supported by the Ministry of Science and Innovation (MSI). TMC have now formed a business unit called **Encircle Medical Devices** to internationally commercialize the products and the ensuing range from it.

More than 40% of people over 45 suffer from circulatory problems, ranging from venous stasis, hypertension, varicose veins, deep vein thrombosis (DVT) to ulcers and chronic venous disease (CVD). CVD is one of the fastest growing chronic diseases and in the United States accounts for 4.6 million lost working days every year.

The Medical Design Excellence Awards competition (www.MDEAwards.com) is organized and presented by UBM Canon (Los Angeles) and is the only awards program that exclusively recognizes contributions and advances in the design of medical products. Entries are evaluated on the basis of their design and engineering features, including innovative use of materials, user-related functions that improve healthcare delivery and change traditional medical attitudes or practices, features that provide enhanced benefits to the patient, and the ability of the product development team to overcome design and engineering challenges so that the product meets its clinical objectives.

A comprehensive review of the entries was performed by an impartial, multidisciplinary panel of third-party jurors with expertise in biomedical engineering, human factors, industrial design, medicine, and diagnostics.

Andy Wynne, CEO of The Merino Company, said that the company was honored to receive international recognition for Encircle.

“The MDEA Award recognizes the quality of the design and research work as well as the commercial potential of this unique product. We are developing a whole business around Encircle and see significant potential in taking merino to a new level.”



Fig. 2 Easy-to-use specification chart for clinicians and OTC use

Suppliers have been sourced in Australia and New Zealand initially and product orders have meant that the first manufacturing runs are immediately being dispersed across both countries with re-orders immediately in the pipeline.

About Encircle Medical Devices

Merino wool is known to provide the highest levels of next-to-skin comfort, but with its range of natural health benefits (such as antimicrobial, moisture management and odor-inhibiting activities) it is the perfect material to evolve into the medical arena. The Merino Company has taken great strides to position itself perfectly as a vertically integrated (from farm to pharmacy) company with the formation of Encircle Medical Devices as its medical commercialization unit.

Ray Lewis, Global Sales Director for Encircle Medical Devices said: “With such a huge portion of the growing population of over 45s reportedly suffering some sort of venous disorder, these products are hitting a real need in the marketplace.”

“Much more than just a flight sock, the treatments are broad ranging to any ailment in the lower limb potentially aided by compression support. The genius of the design is in its effective simplicity, and as a natural product it is meeting consumer needs and preferences in one. We see that the diverse range of benefits will maximize the base human need for comfort and a healthy vascular system in the vitally-important lower limb.”

Mr. Lewis added: “With interest already apparent around the world - and proactively coming to us, our first priority is to partner with the right organizations in the right territories at the right time.

“These awards, added to those received in Australasia, are a great testament to the huge efforts put in across many years to make every detail and design component the best it could be, and has certainly helped bring these great products into the public eye.”

For more information visit: www.encirclemedicaldevices.com

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