

READ ABOUT THE MEDICAL DEVICE THAT REDUCES THE CHANCE OF FEEDING TUBES BEING MISPLACED INTO THE LUNGS. **GEORGE GALLAGHER**, THE FOUNDER AND CEO OF ENTERAL ACCESS TECHNOLOGIES, EXPLAINS HOW THE DEVICE WORKS AND WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT.

Q A *DoubleCHEK* THIS OUT!

How does DoubleCHEK work?

DoubleCHEK is a device designed to help clinicians and carers to safely place nasogastric feeding tubes. It checks that a feeding tube is correctly placed into the stomach to administer medication and food.

Misplacement of a feeding tube into the lungs should not happen – it's what the NHS terms a 'Never Event'. But it happens multiple times every year. Our device prevents feeding tubes from ever going into the lung by 'DoubleCHEK'ing for the presence of both carbon dioxide and stomach acid through a pH test. Conventional products only check for pH, so this double lock significantly reduces the chance of misplacement and is something nurses are recognising as a real innovation.

There is no other product on the market that does what we do. As a result, we've been able to get excellent access to hospitals, which is unusual given the impact Coronavirus has had on medical device company visits. We're already working with multiple hospitals in the UK, after having only launched our product in October last year!

What was the inspiration for this?

My backstory to this begins when I was a baby. I was born with my oesophagus and trachea fused together, a condition known as a trachea-oesophageal fistula that allowed food and stomach acid to



enter my lungs. I had a procedure at Alder Hey to correct this that saved my life but left me with a big scar from my armpit to my waist to tell the story!

I was then on a feeding tube for three or four months in intensive care and as an adult became aware of my condition and decided we needed to do something about it.

How long have you been developing medical devices?

I started back in 1997. The first device I developed was an IV drip monitor. I had no idea how to develop medical devices at the time but wanted to provide a solution to a problem. A family member was in the hospital, and needed medication, so I took some technology that I was using in a factory and adapted it to try and solve an issue the hospital was having.

This led me to refining the product further and becoming CEO of Zi Medical PLC, raising £8m to develop an intravenous drop monitor and grow the business. Quite the baptism in medical devices! I then moved into confirmation devices for nasogastric feeding and have been in this sector ever since.

What other factors are you considering?

DoubleCHEK is UK designed and made - all of our injection moulding is done in Newcastle and the product is assembled in Stevenage. Britain is a great place to design and develop medical devices – we have a great innovation landscape, access to capital and world leading regulators.

We're also thinking big. We've already filed with the FDA and have a US based team exploring the North American market and have also received interest from European distributors. A big part of what the company is trying to do is to make sure that UK innovation that's developed and seeded into the NHS is then introduced to the rest of the world so we can improve patient safety for as many people as possible.

We're also looking at expanding our product range in the medium term – DoubleCHEK has received a fantastic reception so far from the clinical and business communities, and my vision is to use the knowledge, expertise, and capabilities we have at Enteral Access Technologies to solve other challenges in our sector.

The NHS is just littered with innovation and people with good ideas, but they don't have access to the resources, skills, and the knowledge to be able to bring that to market. On top of this, there's very few of us who have walked the road from concept through to commercially available lifesaving products - it's quite rare because most of them fall over in the first two years. Mentoring and investment is key – that is one of the most valuable lessons I've learned on my journey and would encourage others to make sure those two things are in place.