

## Telemedical ECG Service Helps Save North Sea Gas and Oil Industry Offshore Workers' Lives

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ECG monitoring from Broomwell helps deliver emergency services to oil and gas rig workers and prevents unnecessary hospital visits

24 June, 2008 – Telemedical ECG monitoring from Broomwell Healthwatch is helping to save lives by providing immediate, offshore cardiac diagnosis for the industry's oil and gas rig workers, and cutting the cost of healthcare for the North Sea oil and gas industry.

Abermed, medical services provider to the North Sea oil and gas industry, deployed a telemedical ECG service from telemedicine specialist Broomwell Healthwatch to 20 rigs across the North Sea to help offshore medics diagnose coronary blood clots and correctly administer medication to treat the problem on-site as part of their 24/7 offshore emergency service cover.

Dr Euan Thompson, medical director for Abermed, said: "The telemedical ECG service has been an invaluable aid to our rig medics and has allowed us to set up a service for our clients which provides their employees with timely and preventative cardiac care, helping to save lives.

"A key benefit of the service is the time frame within which preventative action can be taken. The rig workers are in close proximity to the rig medics, so if needs be a diagnosis can be made and medication can be administered within just 30 minutes – and all without having to take the patient onshore to hospital. This not only cuts costs, but more importantly saves time, ensuring the patient receives optimal care."

Prior to the deployment patients with chest-pain symptoms were either transported onshore for diagnosis and treatment or were tested on-site with a traditional ECG machine. However this method relied heavily on data being sent to a coronary unit for analysis and the data quality was inferior to that generated by the telemedical ECG; this method was also much more costly.

Abermed staff have found the handheld ECG device easy to use and training takes minimal time. The units have also been customised to accommodate the oil and gas rigs' requirements; with no phone signal available on some rigs Broomwell's service has been tailored to operate via satellite or Internet transmissions, transmitting the ECG data via a JPEG image, as opposed to the standard acoustic transmission via the telephone.

Joshua Rowe, CEO for Broomwell Healthwatch, said: "The Broomwell service provides non-specialist medics with expert cardiac diagnostic support. Our clinicians make an on-the-spot diagnosis, giving rig medics immediate and expert cardiac advice to support their clinical decisions. This improves outcomes and provides valuable reassurance for staff and patients."

An example of the service in action is an offshore worker who came to see the offshore medic one Sunday morning with chest tightness. The medic took an ECG and transmitted it to Broomwell whilst at the same time contacting Abermed. Following the advice given by Broomwell, as there was no sign of myocardial infarction, (on that or subsequent ECGs) the decision was made to keep the patient on the installation. The patient made a full recovery and there was no need for evacuation. Had evacuation been required, not only would it risk the lives of the flight crew and medical attendant, it would have cost many thousands of pounds.

The telemedicine approach has been used successfully across a number of primary care bodies in the UK. In a major NHS pilot\* of the Broomwell technology, 16% of patients using the ECG telemedical service avoided referral to A&E and Admissions, demonstrating the potential to save 90,000 A&E visits and 45,000 hospital admissions.

Another major pilot by the Greater Manchester and Cheshire Cardiac Network indicates that, due to the use of the Broomwell service, 64% of patients avoided referrals to Outpatients. The two pilots translate to a cost saving of some £100,000,000 per annum. The service is now deployed across virtually all PCTs in Greater Manchester and in numerous PCTs across the country.

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\*The full report is available from the website of the NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Cardiac Network, visit [www.lsccardiacnetwork.nhs.uk](http://www.lsccardiacnetwork.nhs.uk)

\*\* A treatment that dissolves a blood clot thrombus-a blood clot that has formed in a vein

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#### About BroomWell Healthwatch

The company was established in 2004 to provide telemedical monitoring services to GPs, Walk-in Centres, Community Hospitals and private individuals. Broomwell's solutions include the wristwatch-like MiniClinic, which is linked to the company's monitoring centre by a home base station, 12-lead portable ECGs, and weight control solutions for congestive heart failure. These are supported by Broomwell's 24-hour cardiac monitoring centre, which is staffed by experienced cardiology-trained clinicians giving immediate, expert interpretation of ECGs.

[www.broomwellhealthwatch.com](http://www.broomwellhealthwatch.com)

#### About Abermed

Established in 1983 to provide medical services to the North Sea oil and gas industry, as Aberdeen Industrial Doctors Limited, Abermed has evolved to become one of the leading UK-based providers of occupational health care.

As well as health promotion services, Abermed has a full offshore medics service and is also fully equipped to provide both topside and diving medical emergency services, offering a 24/7 emergency cover service with specialist doctors experienced in practising in harsh offshore conditions.

It can also supply repatriation services, occupational hygienist service, supply company doctors to organisations, carry out audits of medical services available on installations and prepare protocol manuals.

It runs a comprehensive travel clinic and is the largest provider of Oil and Gas UK medicals.

As well as Aberdeen, the company also has offices in Dyce, Dundee, Teesside, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Great Yarmouth and Norwich, employing more than 150 staff.

[You can find this press release here](#)