Medical Futures -
Nurturing Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the Healthcare Sector

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The healthcare profession is exceptionally innovative, yet many groundbreaking ideas for whatever reason fail to leave the drawing board. Medical Futures is dedicated to encouraging and promoting a culture of creativity and innovation amongst healthcare professionals and facilitating the successful commercialisation of their ideas.

The Medical Futures Innovation Awards create a platform that brings together high-level policy makers, strategic thinkers and the grassroots practitioners who deliver care. Each year the Awards attract over 600 entries from a wide spectrum of sources including the NHS, academic institutions and private businesses. Entrants include medical professionals (consultants and juniors, GPs, nurses and professions allied to medicine), scientists and company executives. Entries to the Awards can be at any stage of development, from concept to fully implemented practices and businesses.

In addition to the annual Awards Ceremony, Medical Futures publishes the aspirational Medical Futures magazine and runs regular networking events including the unique Intellectual Property Booster events which enable medical innovators to gain valuable advice and mentoring from leading advisors in the fields of intellectual property, financing and commercialisation.

The 2003 Awards Ceremony, hosted by the BBC’s Phil Hammond will take place on 30th October at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). James Burke, best selling author and TV presenter will address the audience of 350 key opinion leaders with an inspiring talk on Innovation. The audience will include Government and cross-party policymakers, senior representatives of the healthcare, business and media professions and the leading healthcare innovators. On the night the 10 Award winners will be announced as well as the Overall Winner. The charitable evening is in aid of the Genetic Interest Group and Cancer Research UK. The Awards are run on a not for profit basis and are made possible through the generous support of industry, with blue chip sponsors including, Orange, Nomura, Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer.

The prestigious judging panel is comprised of 30 leading figures in science, healthcare and business. Judges include Sir Richard Sykes, Professor Sir Ara Darzi, Professor Carol Black, Sir Nicholas Lyell QC and Sir Chris Evans OBE. The 30 finalists presented to the judging panel as part of the decision process leading up to the Awards, however, the information on winners, will remain strictly confidential until the awards ceremony on the 30th October.

In 2002, the Awards and winners attracted over 300 pieces of high quality mainstream media coverage including national broadcast television (ITN News and the BBC), radio (National & Regional), the broadsheet press (The Times, The Sunday Telegraph, Financial Times) and popular press (Daily Mail, Daily Mirror). In addition there was extensive coverage by the medical press.

Winning a Medical Futures Innovation Award offers entrants the opportunity of both significant exposure in the press and recognition amongst key opinion leaders in the healthcare arena as well as credibility with investors. The endorsement of the Awards allowed several of the winners to receive financing and help, despite previously being turned down. The 30 finalists in the 2003 Medical Futures Innovation Awards can be seen by visiting the website, www.medicalfutures.co.uk. Details of the winners will be announced on the 30th October 2003.

Details of the 2002 Winners in Brief

- ‘Automated Tissue Engineering’, developed by Dr Chris Mason, a surgeon from UCL, was the overall winner and winner of the Best Biotechnology Start-Up Innovation.
- ‘Sweet Talk’, a novel text messaging service for teenagers with diabetes, developed by Dr Victoria Franklin, a Specialist Registrar in Paediatrics, from the University of Dundee was the winner of two awards, the Best Innovation in Preventive Medicine and the Best Innovation in Health Communication.
- ‘Imprint Injector’ a revolutionary, painless blunt needle auto-injector developed by Peter Crocker and Dr Kevin Maynard won the Best Business Proposition Award and went on to receive £100,000 of fast track funding from NESTA.
- The Acerobot Company Ltd won the Award for Best Surgical Innovation, with its Acrobot(r) Hands-On Robotic System for Orthopaedic Surgery, developed by Brian Davies, Professor of Medical Robotics at Imperial College, London, and his team,
in collaboration with Justin Cobb, an NHS Orthopaedic Surgeon at the Middlesex Hospital.

• A Portable Personal Heart Attack Detector, developed by Consultant Physician, Dr Michael Vassallo of the Royal Bournemouth Hospital, won the Best Innovation to Improve Patient Care Award.

• ‘Telemedicine Biosensor Smartcard,’ a unique invention for capturing and transferring clinical data, developed by James Jackson, won the Best Innovation in Integrated Medicine.

• Recombinant Protein (Surfactant D), a medical advance in the treatment of babies suffering from premature lung disease, developed by Dr Howard Clark and his team at Oxford University won the Best Innovation to Improve Child Health.

• ‘Venox,’ a novel non-invasive device to assess critically ill patients in the intensive care setting, developed by Tomasz Spyt, a Cardiac Surgeon at the Glenfield Hospital, together with his team at Loughborough University won the Best Medical Innovation.

• ‘Voxar Colonscreen,’ a PC-based “virtual colonoscopy” solution to detect colorectal cancer less invasively without the need for sedation developed by Voxar based in Edinburgh won the Best Diagnostic Imaging Innovation.