

# Carefully crafted condoms

Since I wrote my last column for this magazine I've had the pleasure of spending a couple of weeks in Dubai in order to meet some of my customers and – unofficially, of course – spend some time in the sun to escape the rainy winter weather in the UK!

I timed the trip to coincide with the Arab Health show so I could join some of my exports team members who were exhibiting there. I always jump at the chance to see what's happening in the global healthcare market, catch up with old friends and spread the news about Durbin.

The most interesting aspect of the show for me and my team this year was the response to one of our new suppliers – condom manufacturer Britannia Medicare. We became one of their worldwide distributors soon after the launch of our new contraceptive supply service, Durbin Clinic Sales, last year and we were joined on the stand by one of their directors, armed with a small pull-up stand, plenty of literature and loads of samples.

The Confident Condoms they make are available in a range of shapes, sizes, textures and flavours. And a recent development in the condom market is the 'delaying agent' that's been

By Leslie Morgan

mixed with the lubricant to help prolong intercourse by delaying ejaculation.

The products that caused a real stir at our stand, however, were the recently launched Confident Classic, Visage and Exotic range.

These condoms are made with vitamin E which has been shown to lubricate the skin for increased comfort, aid the repair of damaged cells and improve the tensile strength of the latex (as confirmed by the British Standards Institute, the UK body that grants the coveted BSI Kitemark). These condoms were developed in response to the WHO recommendation that Nonoxinol-9 spermicides should no longer be used in condoms because they can damage the vaginal cell wall if they're used often.

Condoms have been around for a very long time, but with worldwide levels of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) continuing to rise, let alone the age-old problem of unplanned pregnancy, their global importance has never been greater.

On a more local level, The *AIDS Epidemic Update 2004* by UNAIDS reports that in the Middle East and North Africa



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region 'even basic steps of protection such as condom promotion are largely absent.' From our experience at the show, interest in the condoms, particularly these new vitamin-E infused brands, was phenomenal.

Almost everybody who passed the stand stopped to talk to us and took away samples. Several journalists and TV reporters seemed very interested and interviewed us in depth.

Thanks to the research and development teams dedicated to improving comfort and safety, there's never been

a wider choice of condoms available. Surely by now there must be a condom to suit everyone.

And, when you consider that using one each time you have intercourse can literally be a matter of life and death, it seems now is the perfect moment for us all to shout about the amazing benefits of condoms. ■



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Durbin PLC is a British company based in South Harrow, London. Established in 1963, the company specialises in supplying quality assured pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and consumable supplies to healthcare professionals and aid agencies in over 100 countries. As well as reacting rapidly to emergency situations, Durbin PLC responds to healthcare supply needs from local project level to national scale programmes. Web address: [www.durbin.co.uk](http://www.durbin.co.uk) Email: [L.morgan@durbin.co.uk](mailto:L.morgan@durbin.co.uk)