

# Fabulous DigiFab



## By Leslie Morgan

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Earlier this year I touched upon the fact that Durbin has distributed products for other manufacturers for several years. This is currently an area of the business we're expanding and I'm pleased to report that we're now able to bring an exciting addition to our already extensive portfolio in the Middle East.

DigiFab, officially known as Digoxin Immune Fab (Ovine) and manufactured by Protherics, is a FDA registered therapy for the treatment of cardiac glycoside overdose and clinically interchangeable with Digibind from GSK. DigiFab is also used in Sri Lanka for the treatment of Oleander poisoning, a plant commonly found in South East Asia which contains digitalis-like substances, after accidental or deliberate ingestion. Another known use of the drug is after acci-

dental ingestion of Digoxin by children. Sales have increased both in the UK and the US, probably due to the ageing population as it is most commonly used in elderly patients.

So where does DigiFab fit into the overall therapeutic picture? If Digoxin, a cardiac glycoside, has previously been prescribed for cardiac patients, usually during arterial fibrillation and in cases of heart failure, overdose or chronic accumulation in the body may occasionally result in life-threatening toxicity. This is because of its narrow therapeutic range. It is estimated that approximately 7,500 cases of digoxin poisoning occur every year in Europe and the US, and the most recent statistics available show that almost 3,000 cases of abnormal human exposure to cardiac glycosides were reported to the American Association of Poison Control Centres in 2002.

For those patients with serious digoxin toxicity, immunotherapy with digoxin-specific Fab fragments is the treatment of choice. It works because DigiFab is a digoxin-specific, antibody fragment preparation for the treatment of digoxin toxicity. In fact, the introduction of digoxin-specific Fab fragments has revolutionised the treatment of severely toxic patients. Additionally, numerous clinical studies have shown that even refractory arrhythmias asso-

ciated with dramatically elevated glycoside levels can be reversed within minutes after administration of digoxin immune ovine Fab fragments.

The bottom line is that the treatment of cardiac glycoside toxicity with Fab immunotherapy is an effective, safe and cost effective therapy.

It fills me with pride to know that we stock such a life-changing product and others like it – for instance, we also stock Ledclair, another antidote product that is used to treat lead and other heavy metal poisoning. It's products like these that have such specific uses, yet make such a huge difference to an individual's life.

Most hospitals in the UK and US have a supply of DigiFab in stock specifically for emergency situations. If you're a purchasing manager in a hospital pharmacy, you may want to consider stocking up on DigiFab. Then you'll be prepared for all the above eventualities.

On the other hand, if you don't have stock, Durbin PLC can also offer a next-day 24-hour delivery service to anywhere in the world, including, of course, to the Middle East. We can get DigiFab to you and your patient overnight. Simply give one of our multilingual sales team a call on 00 44 (0) 20 8869 6500 or send us an enquiry via [www.durbin.co.uk](http://www.durbin.co.uk) We look forward to hearing from you. ■

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 140 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)