

# Hospital hygiene under the microscope

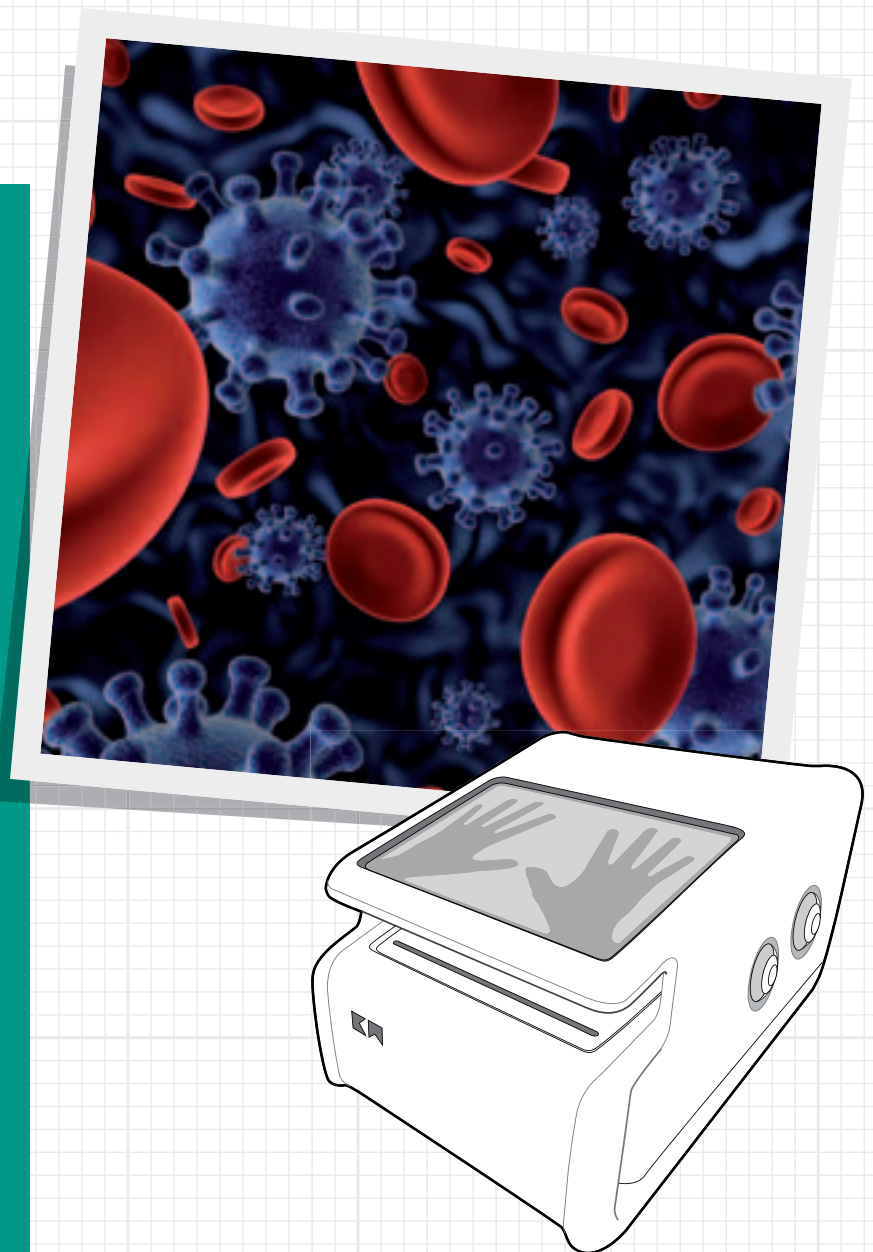
Scientists have developed a revolutionary hand hygiene technique which could have a major impact on the health of our hospitals.

The new technology, researched by Bath-based Creo Medical boosts cleanliness by providing swift, thorough, hand sterilisation without the need for scrubbing with soaps or gels. This new technology could make a dramatic difference to the fight against infection. The Government's SBRI (Small Business Research Initiative) competition for new ideas and technologies is ensuring it gets every chance to succeed.

Hospital chiefs face a daily battle to improve hygiene standards, with superbugs like MRSA and *C. difficile* always on the radar.

The Non-Thermal Plasma Hand Sterilisation System is being developed with Government funding and the support of the Technology Strategy Board in a bid to provide a new, user-friendly solution.

Instead of soap and water or sterilising gel, people put their hands into the machine, similar to a modern hand-dryer, and a line of plasma (ionised gas with microbiological properties) scans across the hands, ensuring total coverage.



# Technology Strategy Board

Driving Innovation

It is hoped the technology will encourage more people to abide by hospital hand-cleaning requests as it is quicker, easier and kinder to the skin, as well as far more effective at killing bacteria.

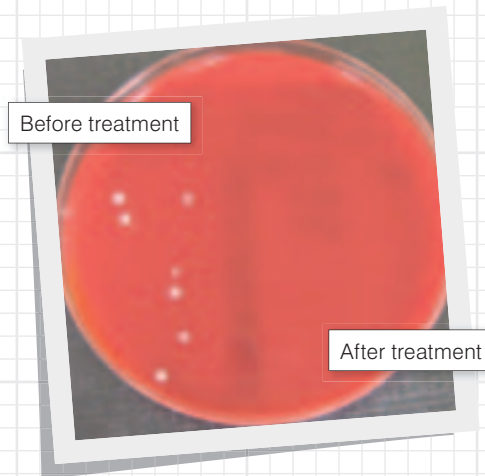
In recognition of this potential, developers Creo Medical (chosen as one of 13 winners out of 53 applicants to the SBRI competition) received an initial £100,000 development contract to prove the feasibility of their technology plus £750,000 for a phase 2 contract to develop the final product.

The UK public sector spends around £220bn a year on goods and services, and the SBRI scheme provides a way to enable departments to use some of this money to drive innovation, providing vital funding for the critical stage of technology development.

The contract has enabled Creo Medical to firm up its work to prove that the concept is viable by refining the delivery of the line of plasma. The next stage will be full product development.

SBRI is a pan government process, supported by the Technology Strategy Board, to drive innovation. SBRI competitions use the power of Government procurement to:

- provide innovative solutions to public sector challenges
- and business opportunities for technology companies.



'SBRI has been a breath of fresh air. Although horror stories abound about endless red tape when applying for Government support, nothing could be further from the truth with the SBRI initiative. We were awarded a contract direct with the Department of Health.'

STEVE MORRIS, CREO MEDICAL

## KEY FEATURES

- Competition is demand driven by a defined challenge
- Stimulates the creation of innovative new products or services
- Operates under EU pre-commercial procurement guidelines
- Fully-funded development contract, not a grant
- Fast-track, simplified process
- Particularly suitable for small and medium-sized businesses
- Government department acts as the lead customer
- Intellectual property is retained by the company

## COMPETITION

### Healthcare associated infections

Department of Health, National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) The Department of Health needs to find new ways to tackle the serious problem of healthcare associated infections.

Current statistics for England and Wales show that 5,109 patient deaths involved MRSA and 13,189 involved *C. difficile* during 2001-2006. The Department identified hand hygiene as the focus for a SBRI competition.

The October 2008 competition attracted 53 new ideas and applications. Following assessment, 13 businesses were awarded initial contracts for further development, of these 5 have progressed to Phase 2, to create the final product.

