

Local doctor one of first to use new urine flow medical device

Parkers Prairie company develops alternate to catheter

By Amy Chaffins

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We all do it, it's a natural process - passing urine is the body's way of getting rid of waste.

However, for men with urinary obstruction, urinating is not an easy process.

A local company has taken the initiative to develop a medical device that offers relief for men suffering from reduced urine flow as a result of an enlarged prostate.

AbbeyMoor Medical, based in Parkers Prairie, invented The Spanner Prostatic Stent - a silicone tube that holds open the obstructing tissue in a man's enlarged prostate.

As the prostate gland enlarges, it squeezes the urethra - the tube that runs from the bladder out of the body - making it difficult for a man to empty his bladder.

The Spanner provides an open channel through which a man can empty his bladder. It's an alternative to a catheter and collection bag.

The Spanner does not have any external parts and, when in place, allows the rest of the urinary system to work, according to John Reid, co-founder and CEO of AbbeyMoor Medical.

The Spanner is the only temporary stent for the prostate available in the U.S. and the device can be inserted and removed in a doctor's office.

Lloyd Willard, who co-founded AbbeyMoor, lives in Miltna, and Mark Whalen, who led the research and development effort, lives in Alexandria.

The Spanner has reportedly been in development for 14 years.

"Inventing a new medical product and successfully bringing it to the market is a complex and rigorous challenge," Reid noted. "We are so very grateful for the support of our community."

LOCAL DOCTOR USES THE SPANNER ON LOCAL PATIENTS

Not only is the company local, but some of the first men to have The Spanner placed live in the Alexandria area.

Due to patient, confidentiality restrictions, the men were not contacted by the *Echo Press* for comment, but Alexandria Clinic urologist Kurt Hansberry, MD, said the device has brought those men relief.

Hansberry used The Spanner for the first time last December; he was the first doctor in the area to place the device and he has placed it in three patients, accord-

BENEFITS

Benefits of The Spanner over standard urethral catheter

- Quality of life. The Spanner does not have any external parts whereas a catheter extends out of the body to a urine collection bag.
- Lower rate of infection. The rate of bacteriuria with a catheter is four to five times faster than The Spanner.
- Control. The Spanner allows the urinary system to void urine normally, whereas a catheter drains the bladder with gravity, not muscle control.

Source: www.thespinner.com

ing to Reid.

"I was somewhat skeptical of the product because I hadn't used it before," Hansberry said. "But so far, so good on a limited number of patients."

Hansberry said The Spanner is a niche product in the urological field, used for a very specific purpose; it's a stopgap measure for a man who may not tolerate a surgical procedure, and it also may help determine whether a man will benefit from a surgical procedure.

Hansberry said urologists could learn the procedure to place The Spanner without any difficulty, but the learning curve may be steep for other health care providers.

The doctor also expressed concern that marketing a new medical device may be a challenge for AbbeyMoor.

Hansberry said, "I think to market this and get it to the urological community as a whole is a much bigger job than a small company in rural Minnesota can do."

However, Hansberry added, "So far, I'm impressed with the product. It's well designed and has been effective for the right patient."



Kurt Hansberry
UROLOGIST

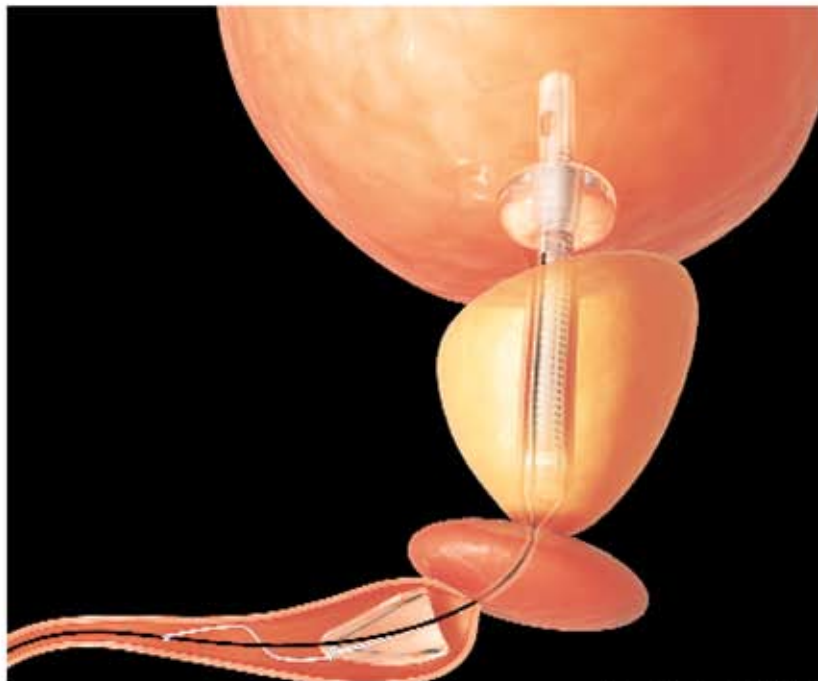


Image courtesy of AbbeyMoor

In this 3D image, The Spanner is shown in place, holding open the obstructing tissue in an enlarged prostate. The device provides an open channel through which a man can empty his bladder.