Weck Closure Systems Selected as Finalist In Excellence Awards for 'Hem-o-lok' System

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RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C.--(BW HealthWire)--March 20, 2000--Weck Closure Systems has been selected as a finalist for a Gold Award in the Medical Design Excellence annual competition.

Weck was selected for its innovative "Hem-o-lok" polymer vessel-ligating clip. The award series recognizes product innovation, design and engineering excellence, end-user benefit and cost-effectiveness in health care industry manufacturing. Due to its selection as a finalist for a Gold Award, Weck is now assured of at least a Silver Award.

Weck Closure Systems, a unit of Teleflex Corporation (TFX-NYSE), is the national market share leader in production and marketing of vessel ligating clips, which are used an alternative to suture-tie material for achieving hemostasis on various-sized vessels encountered in surgery--especially where access is difficult. Weck first established a substantial market for vessel ligating clips in the years following its 1963 release of the Hemoclip metal ligating clip. Metal clip usage in surgery was sparing before the advent of the Hemoclip clip due to cumbersome clip design and material selection. WCS now sells over 100 million metal clips annually, which are marketed in tantalum, titanium and stainless steel versions. Weck competes in the ligating clip market with much larger corporate entities, including US Surgical (Tyco) and Ethicon (Johnson & Johnson).

In 1999, Weck (WCS) introduced the Hem-o-lok polymer ligating clip as its first major clip design improvement after years of research and development at its Research Triangle Park headquarters. WCS based the product on user input obtained from ongoing marketing of metal ligating clips and specific customer surveys that categorized key target areas for improvement. WCS also subjected the design to third-party critical scrutiny, assembling a panel of international scientists in Research Triangle Park from world-prominent institutions, including Duke University, Cambridge University, University of Pennsylvania, Max-Planck-Institut, Research Triangle Institute and North Carolina State University, during Hem-o-lok's design phase. The review produced a 431-page document which guided further design and development work in the Triangle. Weck also obtained feedback from surgeons at Duke University Medical Center, North Carolina Memorial Hospital, Stanford University Medical Center and Texas Heart Institute during a later stage of the project.

The Hem-o-lok clip enhances ligating clip performance across a broad spectrum of performance parameters. The clip is designed to eliminate clip dropout from appliers, enhance security on vessels, provide tactile closure feedback to surgeons, and eliminate imaging interference with MRI and CT Scans. The Hem-o-lok clip lock also engages through a variety of tissues that surrounds blood vessels, enhancing its advantage for particular types of surgery, such as colon and rectal surgery, for clipping through the mesenteric membrane that supports feeder vessels to intestines. All these performance advantages can translate to significant timesavings in surgery, producing cost benefits for operating rooms and patients.

The Hem-o-lok clip also facilitates minimally invasive surgery by making clip application compatible with smaller ports. The Hem-o-lok polymer clip can be compressed for insertion down a small cannula but reopened inside the cavity for application to vessels or ducts. (A "cannula" is a tubular pipe-like port for endoscopic surgery that allows insertion of instruments while maintaining the CO2 -inflated abdomen necessary for visibility and maneuverability of organs in laparoscopic surgery) The confirmed tactile snap-lock of the clip also aids in confirming proper closure once inside the cavity. Weck introduced the clip in one size in April 1999 with open surgery appliers. WCS is just now hitting the market with substantial quantities of its endoscopic version of appliers. WCS will soon introduce a new size Hem-o-lok clip as well.

Weck Closure Systems, headquartered in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, markets a variety of metal ligating clip lines, including Horizon, Hemoclip and Atrauclip. WCS also markets Visistat skin stapling and Weck electrosurgical products, as well as a variety of other closure products. The Hem-o-lok clip was recognized as a finalist in the Surgical Equipment, Instrumentation and Supply category. This is one of ten product categories judged by a panel of healthcare specialists. The award is based upon descriptive materials submitted to the jurors; the jurors and the competition operators did not verify the accuracy of any submission or of any claims made and did not test the item to which the award was given.

Final results of the competition will be announced at the Medical Device and Manufacturing Exposition, June 6-8, in New York City. For more information on the Hem-o-lok polymer ligating clip contact Al Hicks at 1-800-334-9751, Extension 3907, or ahicks@weckclosure.com.

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