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Dear friends and partners,  
hygiene products for the management of incontinence have their own particular marketing problem – as we all know only too well from our day-to-day practice. Because of the strong association between ageing and incontinence (more about this inside), together with the relentless ageing of the populations in the industrialised nations of the West, this market is without doubt a growing one. However, it is equally certain that it will become increasingly difficult for the national health systems to pay the management costs. The procurement of greater and greater co-payments on the part of the patients affected will be inevitable.

We are trying to address this trend, which is already making itself clearly felt in some ways, with our product range and pricing policy – in keeping with the motto: with Vlesia's

products, incontinence management should remain affordable.

This might sound a little pretentious, given our (as yet) minor market significance. Nevertheless, we are already able to offer you a full range of top-quality incontinence products at acceptable prices, allowing you in turn to respond to the trend, and you can rest assured that we will continue to do everything we can to help to make this strategy a marketing success.

Yours sincerely,



As already announced, the meeting will be held at the idyllically situated Hotel Rebstock, so even the pleasant social aspects of a meeting will receive their fair share of attention.

## First meeting of distributors from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2004 with an interesting agenda

Our primary marketing strategy, then, is to supply incontinence products that will stand up to future marketing problems. We intend to show you the details of how we will do this at the meeting.

It will start on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> May at 9.15 a.m. on the subject of "Technical improvements on incontinence products". The current situation as well as the trends in product development will be presented. The medium-term marketing strategies will then be discussed. On Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May, CMC Center for Marketing and Communication will explain the Vlesia Marketing Information System (MIS), with which many of our customers are already working. Finally, our logistics and transport partner Kentner will deal with the subject of "Aspects of warehousing and delivering incontinence products around the world".

## New drug therapy for stress incontinence in sight?

Globally, urinary incontinence predominantly affects women. Most of them suffer from stress incontinence, which in many cases is due to a weak sphincter, caused by a pelvic floor musculature that has become slack or has been damaged during childbirth. The treatment options available include both conservative and surgical methods. As far as conservative methods are concerned, there are pelvic floor exercises, which achieve good success rates if the exercises are practised systematically, while surgery aims to improve the anatomical situation in the urogenital region by means of surgical support procedures. So far, drug therapy has been confined to hormone preparations intended to balance the hormone deficiency often associated with stress incontinence.

Promising data from clinical trials that have adopted a neurobiological treatment approach are now giving every reason to hope that an effective drug therapy is in sight. There is a new active agent (duloxetine) that influences the sphincter in the urethra by means of neurotransmitter regulation. This could allow the persons affected to experience fewer episodes of incontinence and therefore benefit from a better quality of life.



For the sake of the many women who suffer from urinary incontinence, it would be desirable if the new active agent also constituted a medical therapy option for stress incontinence.

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# Vicious circle: incontinence & age

## Incontinence is one of the most common diseases of old age

Although incontinence can occur at any age, it is strongly associated with ageing, for a wide variety of reasons. First of all, there are the natural changes that come with ageing, and the functional disturbances that they bring, then all the diseases of old age that have both a physical and a psychological effect on continence, and certain environmental factors which often do anything except promote continence. But even though incontinence in old age is due to a mixture of causes, it should not be regarded fundamentally as untreatable.



What makes urinary incontinence so linked to old age? Basically, there are three problem areas, which often coincide, making the risk of becoming incontinent as we age fairly high.

### Natural age-related changes affect continence

At the heart of these are changes affecting the kidneys and urinary tract. With increasing age, the rate at which the renal corpuscles perform their filtration function declines considerably. On average, the kidney of someone aged 60 is working only half as efficiently as in someone aged 30.

The 24-hour rhythm of urine production also changes. Whereas young people produce most of their urine during the day, and relatively little at night, elderly people often produce just as much urine – or even more – at night as during the day. The change in the rhythm of production is particularly marked in confused or demented people.

A further problem is that the capacity of the urinary bladder decreases, and cortical regulation also seems to be impaired. This is why elderly people have to make more frequent trips to the toilet, and feel a stronger urge to urinate, with a much shorter interval in between each urge.

The ability to urinate completely is often impaired in the elderly, which causes residual urine to

form and creates new problems. In women, the reason for incomplete urination is often what is known as a hypoactive bladder, in which active urination is reduced. In men, constriction of the urethra by the benign growth of the prostate (benign prostatic hypertrophy) is often to blame, leading to the clinical syndrome of overflow incontinence, also known as dribble incontinence.

Furthermore, hormonal changes also play an important role. Many elderly men are troubled by prostate growth, which seems to be caused by an age-related hormonal change. In women, an increasing oestrogen deficiency after the menopause may – but does not necessarily – create problems that cause the urogenital tissue to lose elasticity. A general weakening of the pelvic floor musculature also often goes hand in hand with a weakening of the sphincter system, and this makes stress incontinence – which is the form that occurs most frequently in women – increasingly probable.

### Many of the diseases of old age cause incontinence

The diseases that occur more commonly in the elderly, such as cardiovascular problems, locomotor system conditions, metabolic disorders or neurological and demential diseases, contribute to the development of incontinence in completely different ways. First, there are the diseases that interfere with a person's physical mobility. Whether a person is continent or incontinent often depends on entirely practical aspects, such as what distance the person affected has to cover in order to reach a toilet, how quickly he or she can move, and how much manual dexterity he or she needs in order to be able to undo buttons or zips quickly enough.

By contrast, all the diseases that affect the neurological and cerebral structures have a direct impact on the complicated mechanism of urination. These include, for example, diabetes mellitus, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, stroke, and the various forms of dementia diseases. Also typical of these diseases is a gradual loss of physical mobility, which means that a large number of incontinence-promoting factors coincide here.



### The environment often undermines continence

There are so many practical situations that interfere with the retention of continence or effective nursing care: badly situated toilets, difficulties relating to access, toilets not equipped for the disabled, clothing that is difficult for the person affected to open quickly enough, etc.. And yet, in many cases, these continence-undermining situations could be remedied without great expenditure, in complete contrast to the multi-layered problems that arise in a social setting. One of the most important of these is the fact that incontinence, despite all efforts at education, is still a taboo subject. There it is, with all its difficulties for the persons affected, their relatives and the nursing staff, and yet it is often not accepted as an illness or as the consequence of some other medical condition that can be diagnosed, treated, and improved in many ways.

### Types of incontinence

1) Stress incontinence: Predominantly affects women, including relatively young ones, especially after vaginal deliveries.

2) Urge incontinence: Affects both men and women, in women often accompanied by stress incontinence.

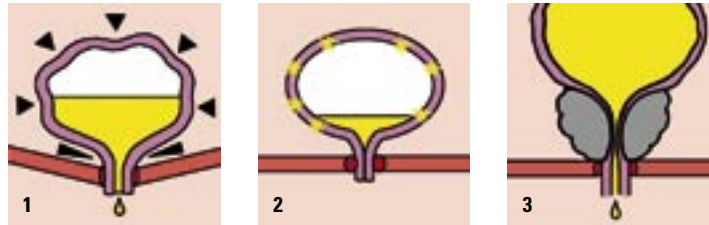
3) Overflow incontinence: Predominantly affects elderly men, because the main cause is a urethral constriction caused by a benign prostatic hypertrophy.

### Treatment options

Pelvic floor training to strengthen the pelvic floor musculature, with or without electrostimulation and biofeedback, caused by hormone replacement therapy, different surgical reconstruction and support procedures, intended to restore the urinary bladder and urethra to their correct anatomical positions.

Drugs that attenuate the overactivity of the bladder, bladder training to extend the length of time between each urination.

Surgical removal of the obstruction, in most cases prostate resection, if necessary with urination through a catheter.



### Common types of incontinence in the old age, and their treatment options

## The use of incontinence products – not a failure of nursing care

Today, the supplying of incontinent patients with absorbent incontinence products constitutes an important part of the overall treatment, even if the persons affected and the nursing staff do not always see it like this. They are a necessary accompaniment to the therapy in order to give the persons affected the reassurance that, until they are free of symptoms, there will be no embarrassing accidents. In cases where the incontinence has become untreatable, absorbent products make living with incontinence a great deal easier, and at least guarantee the persons affected "social continence". In practical terms, this means that they are able to feel secure for hours, and can pursue their usual social activities without worrying, something that plays a crucial part in helping the elderly to retain their vital functions and social skills.

But the treatment of bedridden incontinent people without the use of appropriate incontinence products is also inconceivable nowadays. Besides absorbing excretions – bedridden people are often also affected by faecal incontinence –, protecting the skin is also a priority here, and high-quality incontinence products are able to ensure this. To prevent painful skin conditions, the sensitive skin of the elderly, which, if they are bedridden, is also exposed to continuous pressure, often has to be protected for years from the aggressive degradation products found in urine.

The many important function of absorbent incontinence products also demonstrate why it is so crucial to use not just any incontinence product, but high-quality ones that can address the individual needs of the persons affected.

It is not difficult to find the right product to meet the needs of the person affected in the wide Vlesia range.



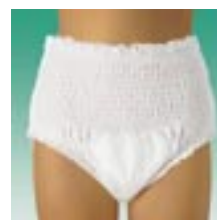
**vlesia-slip**  
Incontinence brief



**vlesia-form elast**  
Incontinence pads



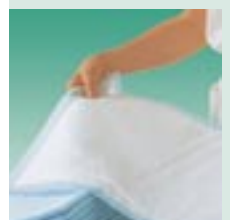
**vlesia-well**  
Incontinence pads for light bladder weakness



**vlesia-pants**  
Incontinence pants



**vlesia-net pants & vlesia-mesh pants**  
Highly elastic net pants for secure fixing



**vlesia-bedsheets**  
Incontinence sheets for effective bed protection

# A classic with a new look

## *vlesi-bedsheets* now with white foil

It is not so long ago that the only aid for absorbing excretions was incontinence underpads made from cellulose, folded more or less skillfully. Now, with the development of what are known as body-worn incontinence products such as briefs and pads, a new era in the hygiene treatment of persons affected by incontinence has begun. However, there is no doing without the classic incontinence bedsheets. By providing reliable protection for the bed, bedding and clothing, as well as guarding against contamination, for example, on examination tables or stretchers, it helps to improve hygiene conditions in many areas of medicine and nursing. Incontinence bedsheets make everyday nursing easier and help to reduce the volume of soiled laundry.

But here again, only a quality product can fulfil these protective functions properly. A product like *vlesi-bedsheets*:

- The absorbent core is made from soft, highly absorbent cellulose flock, which absorbs wetness quickly and completely.

- The soft but durable non-woven surface is drawn over the edges of the foil backing, making it gentle on the skin.
- The underside, made from an impermeable, non-slip foil, protects the bed and bedding and clothing from soiling. Wetness has nowhere to go, because the edges of the foil are sealed all the way around.
- For cost-effective use, *vlesi-bedsheets* are available in a variety of designs and sizes.



**Special big campaign for *vlesi-bedsheets*:**  
From 1st April to 30th June 2004 inclusive, when you order 3 pallets (all one sort), you will receive 1 additional pallet of your choice as an introductory offer.

For even greater discretion, *vlesi-bedsheets* will be equipped with a white rather than a colour foil from March 2004 onwards. All groups of numbers, such as code numbers, PZN (only valid in Germany) or ACL, etc., will stay the same.



### All elements at a click

With the Vlesia Marketing Information System (MIS), you can generate new advertising materials on the latest Vlesia products quickly and easily. All elements, whether complete layouts, high-resolution images or texts in German and English, are available in print quality, and can be easily edited by you or your local agency using tools such as Adobe InDesign for editing the layout or Photoshop for editing the images. You also have the option of adapting the existing advertising materials to suit your company style or of designing new advertising tools directly from individual elements.

On the occasion of the meeting of the distributors, a detailed demonstration on this subject will take place on 19<sup>th</sup> May. We will be generating new communication tools "live" using the elements on the MIS.