

A small fortune for used platinum tips

In late 2010, Rita Granata, WSLHD Manager of Environmental Sustainability, implemented a brand new recycling initiative in our Cardiac Catheter Labs (CCL).

"I'm always on the lookout for environmentally sound initiatives," said Ms. Granata, WSLHD Manager of Environmental Sustainability. "I couldn't turn this one down—whilst it was not going to make us mega bucks, it would certainly provide a tidy sum in the way of revenue which could be directed back to the Cardiac Catheter Labs to be used towards improving patient care."

"This recycling initiative enables our CCL staff to capture all used platinum tips by segregating them in a separate container rather than the usual practice of throwing them out for disposal into the sharps containers at a cost, not only to our health dollar, but obviously to the environment through their sharps destruction process."

Platinum is a rare precious metal and a very scarce resource.

A meeting to discuss the adoption of this recycling incentive was held between the Westmead CCL nurses represented by NUM Annika Fingland, the Infection Control Team and the Environmental Sustainability Manager to discuss the pros and cons, safe work practices and retraining of staff. All agreed to trial this new initiative and processes were then set in motion.

Being only tiny (between 3 & 5mm in length), it took about 9 months to fill up the first two containers with these tips, but the WMH CCL nurses were delighted to receive the first cheque of over \$2,000 for their efforts.

To date, over \$6,000 in rebates have been realised for the nursing team who put in all the work associated in segregating these tips. Of course we also save money by not

disposing these tips and help to conserve the world's scarce platinum deposits from destruction, enabling WSLHD to be further environmentally sustainable.

The company behind the scheme was founded and is administered (part time) by a registered nurse from NSW and provides a fully insured collection service which complies with all Australian regulations and NSW EPA guidelines.

This Catheter Collection Specialists also provide all necessary equipment and uses specialised couriers for the collection and transportation of these tips at no cost to our hospitals.

To find out more about this recycling project, contact Rita Granata on 9845 9917.



Registered Nurses Belson Tungul and Kevin Alcantara demonstrate how to cut the platinum tips and segregate them into a container at Westmead Hospital's Cardiac Catheter Lab.

FACTS on Platinum:

- Platinum is the most precious of the metals. It's relatively scarce in supply
- Only about 130 tons is supplied annually world-wide
- Approx 10 tons of ore must be mined at a temperature of 120°F to produce one pure ounce
- All the platinum mined throughout history would fill a basement less than .7079m³
- Deposits are basically limited to places in the world, South Africa and the former USSR (now CIS)

SOURCE: Gold-Eagle <http://www.gold-eagle.com/article/platinum-rich-mans-gold>