

# Incontinence: New ways to help affected people

By Helena Engqvist

My attention was caught by the cute little lady in her 70-ies. She had been incontinent since she was a little girl. Her incontinence was both urinary and fecal, which made her problem very difficult to manage. To cope with her daily life she used several levels of different absorbent products at the same time to prevent leakages and other problems.

**W**hat are her solutions and how could she feel safe and relaxed despite her conditions?

The conference, "Incontinence: The Engineering Challenge", held in London last November, was an eye-opener to people from the industry, health-care professionals and academia. A wide range of challenging topics, all around the issue of incontinence, presented new ways to approach and help people – and their care-givers – to live a normal life.

## 400 million people in the world who are impacted by various kinds of incontinence

And this lady is only one of some 400 million people in the world who are impacted by various kinds of incontinence. The numbers of people having problems with these indications are huge compared to many other diseases that gain much more attention and funding for research and treatment. Not to speak about the lack of quality of life for these persons as well as their families and personal care-givers.

Alan Cottenden, chairman of the conference: "This was our ninth event and the treatments for incontinence continue to evolve year after year. Incontinence is a condition which millions of people, not only in the UK but across the world, will suffer from at some point in their lives. It is a subject for discussion although it's still considered taboo. We need to change this."

## The industry response

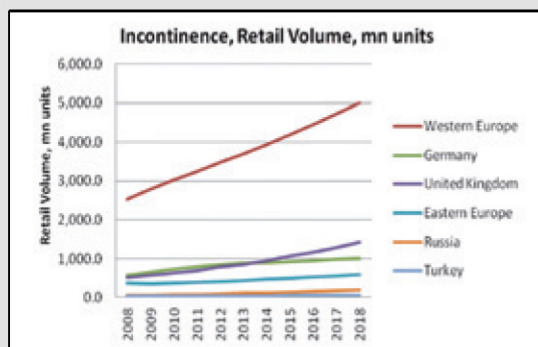
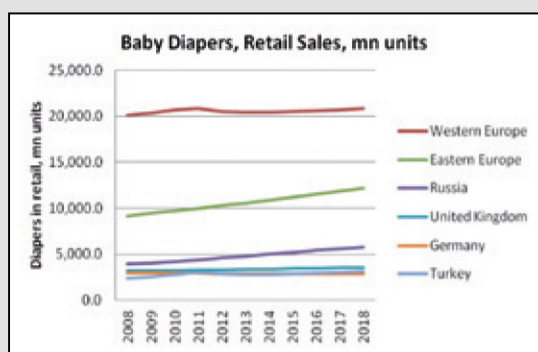
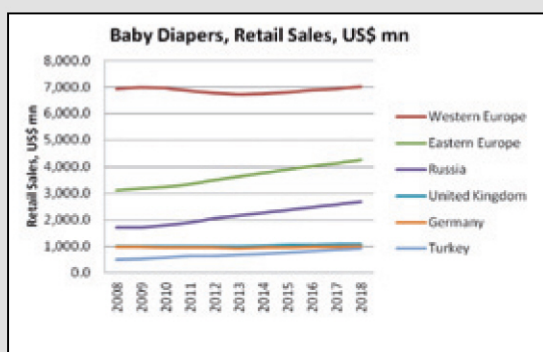
The industry is responding to this challenge by introducing new products and services to help people better manage their lives and reduce the issues around incontinence. We have talked to a few of the market leaders in the industry and they have much to say. Rüdiger Kesselmeier, V.P. of R&D at Hartmann: "Today older people are more mobile and active and have high expectations of the quality of their lives. Therefore it is important to provide products that meet their needs. Doing sports and being incontinent is a difficult equation, but we have developed a product to make it easier to be active. And, often times price is the most

important factor when choosing products.

Especially people in elderly homes and institutions tend to get very poor products. However, better performing products are more cost effective because fewer products can be used. As a conclusion it is possible to present a better total economy for care instead of only looking at the price. We are working with Edana and patient associations, insurance companies as well as standardization organizations to improve the standards that impact how products should be evaluated to best meet patients' needs. In this case we are working together as an industry to improve test methods and standards."

## The intelligent incontinence product

The European as well as global market leader SCA has many new products and solution to support men and women, patients and care-givers. Gunnar Preifors, Strategic Health Care Affairs Director at SCA Hygiene Products in Sweden shared his views: "At SCA we have recently launched the 'intel-



Source: Euromonitor International

ligent' incontinence product, Tena Identifi. This is a unique product that makes it possible to assess an incontinent person's toileting behavior. A small sensor that is wirelessly connected to a computer measures when and how much urine is absorbed in the product during use and all leakages are registered and mapped. We have received very positive feedback when testing and evaluating this product and it is now being launched in some markets. This particular product helps incontinent people to get the right product that best meet their needs – and for care-givers to know when to change the product. And staff in nursing homes will be able to know how many and what type of products should be used for each individual."

But not all incontinent persons are in nursing homes. In fact, the majority of people are living normal lives, but where incontinence has an impact of their quality of life. Here new and better designed products help men and women manage their daily activities. "We are now paying much more attention to products for men with products specifically designed for them," Gunnar Preifors continued. "Also the main product for women, Tena Lady has had a face-lift and the new generation products are so

much more comfortable and efficient with rapid absorption and odor control."

#### Market development

A comparison between the development of the markets for baby diapers and incontinence products clearly reflects that the demographic changes are driving the market. While baby diaper sales are estimated to continue increase on a global level, sales remains quite flat in both value and volume in most European countries, with the exception for Eastern Europe. In contrast, the incontinence category is steadily increasing globally and in all regions because of the increasing share of older people. In 2013 baby diaper sales were estimated to 43 billion US dollars on a global level; corresponding to over 140 billion units, while retail sales for incontinence was estimated to 7 billion US dollars. The diagrams show the trends for retail sales and volume development as estimated by Euromonitor.

#### Trends

Training, publications, patient and professional forums are important ways to increase the awareness of this very secret category. Conferences with medical experts like the one mentioned above and

specialist conferences organized by urologists, gynecologists and nurses promote and raise the information about issues and treatments of incontinence. Highly regarded specialists in many professions are often willing to participate and share their insights on the medical problems and also get to know more about absorbent products.

Much is happening and many new products give people in need a much wider selection of products to make life easier despite a very difficult-to-manage condition. After all, quality in life means to be able to share a social life and not have to be embarrassed because of the risk for leakage, bad odor or other inconvenient issues. Still, compared to baby diapers, adult incontinence is younger product category that only can benefit from much more attention and public awareness. Much can and will be done and it will be exciting to see what the next generation products will look like. Manufactures of materials and product designers are equally important for the future product generations.

More information about incontinence and other hygiene and medical related products can be provided by Engqvist Consulting. Welcome to contact us via new homepage: [www.engqvistconsulting.com](http://www.engqvistconsulting.com).

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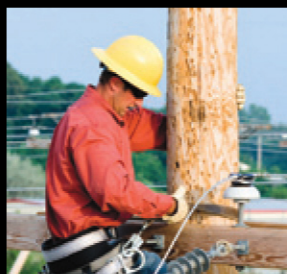


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