Smith & Nephew's Exclusive OXINIUMâ„¢ Material for Hip Replacement Implants Chosen for Premium Reimbursement in Japanese Market

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MEMPHIS, Tenn., Feb. 18, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- OXINIUM™ Oxidized Zirconium, the patented advanced bearing material from Smith & Nephew (NYSE: SNN, LSE: SN) Orthopaedics Division, has been awarded a C1 premium reimbursement classification in Japan for use in hip replacement surgery. The decision by the Central Medical Insurance Committee comes three years after it awarded Smith & Nephew with Japan's first-ever premium price reimbursement for an orthopaedic implant—for the use of OXINIUM material in total knee replacement implants. Smith & Nephew is the only orthopaedic medical device company to have been awarded C1 reimbursement for both hip and knee replacement implants.

The C1 classification rewards innovative products with a higher reimbursement price and is reserved for those products where the advantages over other available products are recognized by Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

OXINIUM™ Oxidized Zirconium is a metal alloy whose surface takes on the hard, wear-reducing properties of ceramic during a proprietary heating process. Since it has the abrasion resistance of a ceramic, it reduces implant wear by 98-percent(1) when coupled with a cross-linked polyethylene cup, compared to traditionally used implant materials (cobalt chrome and standard polyethylene). At the same time, it retains the strength of the underlying zirconium metal alloy, thus eliminating the risk of fracture associated with ceramic implants.

"It is truly an honor for OXINIUM material to have been awarded with premium reimbursement in Japan twice in three years—first for knee replacements, and now for hip replacements," says Joseph M. DeVivo, president of Smith & Nephew Orthopaedics. "It's a testament to our drive to innovate—our material technology is unrivalled globally, and now patients in Japan will have access to the centerpiece of our advanced bearings portfolio."

(1) Parikh, A., Hill P., Hin
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