

Portimão doctor creates that cures glue ear

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INVENTION || A Swedish doctor working in Portimão Hospital has taken the childhood misery out of glue ear by creating a new device which looks like a toy but can cure the problem within as little as two weeks.

The *Algarve Resident* met with Dr. Armin Moniri to find out more about the new invention which has even earned him an honour from his native country's queen.

Talking to us with Dr Ilídio Gonçalves, head of the otolaryngology at Portimão hospital, Dr Moniri said: "Using surgery to deal with this problem brings unnecessary risks to young children", the worst of which can be "respiratory and circulatory failure".

"Although we are still at a testing stage, we have found that 80% of the children who have glue ear and undergo this new treatment are cured in a matter of weeks."

So how does his device work? The *Algarve Resident* was able to see first-hand how simple it all is.

Basically, the treatment involves a face mask,

a pump, a stuffed toy and, well, the rest is as easy as falling off a log.

The child just uses his or her nose to blow into a device that looks just like a teddy bear, with a small balloon inside. The act of blowing helps open up the Eustachian tube, allowing the fluid build-up to drain from the middle ear.

The treatment has to continue uninterrupted for anything from two to four weeks, until no fluid is left in the ear.

By following this course of treatment, parents and children are spared the endless misery of earache, antibiotics, waiting for surgery, and all the rest.

As many parents are aware, even the insertion of grommets through surgery can be a temporary cure, as these tiny devices used to drain the middle ear often drop out before the child has grown out of the problem, and then more surgery is required.

The idea for the gadget was first pitched by Moniri in 2010 and was embraced by the otolaryngology team at the Barlavento hospital.

"Anything that avoids surgeries and cuts economic

costs is a positive step forwards," Dr Gonçalves told us.

Since then, the team has been testing the device on children over the age of two with no negative side effects whatsoever.

"The worst that can happen is that it does not work," Moniri guaranteed.

The success has led Moniri to patent his device and the chances are that very soon the 'Moniri-Otavent' will be



innovative device

available at a number of hospitals as well as pharmacies.

The idea to patent and commercialise the device was actually suggested by Queen Silvia of Sweden, who has already named a

children's hospital after pioneering Armin Moniri, as well as created a foundation in his name.

"I was surprised and honoured to have been praised and distinguished by the

Queen," he said, revealing that some of their conversation concerning the subject was in Portuguese as the Queen lived in Brazil for a period of her life.

When asked about why Moniri chose to work in the Algarve, his face lit up and the words came effortlessly.

"Well, I am married to a Portuguese woman and I simply like Portugal. Truthfully, I have lived in many places and I have yet to find somewhere better than the Algarve," he told us, also stressing the region's quality professionals and otolaryngology services as relevant factors for him setting up in the region.

And what lies ahead now for the doctor and his device?

"We aim to publish a couple more studies and by the summer, if all goes well, we will have the product ready to commercialise," Moniri said.

Until then, the team will continue testing the gadget.

Although the main symptoms for glue ear are hearing problems, other relevant signs are trouble at school, depression and a child that seems isolated from what is going on.



Dr. Armin Moniri (left, holding the device) and Dr. Ilídio Gonçalves at Portimão hospital