

CLAIMS

1. A wetting mechanism for wetting a tube of a catheter, the wetting mechanism comprising:
 - 5 a housing configured to be positioned initially at or proximal to the tip end of the catheter tube, and wherein the housing comprises:
 - a holding chamber for containing a volume of fluid therein; and
 - a wetting chamber into which at least a portion of the catheter tube is able to be introduced and be moved therethrough to move at least a portion of the catheter tube through the wetting chamber, in use;
 - 10 and
 - wherein the wetting mechanism comprises a fluid release control component for controlling release of the fluid from the holding chamber to the wetting chamber.
- 15 2. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 1, wherein the fluid release control component comprises a first configuration wherein it prevents release of the fluid from the holding chamber to the wetting chamber.
3. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 2, wherein the fluid release control component comprises a second configuration wherein it allows release of the fluid from the holding chamber to the wetting chamber.
- 20 4. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 3, wherein the fluid release control component is moveable between the first and second configurations.
5. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 4, wherein the fluid release control component is linearly moveable and/or is rotatable between the first and second configurations.
- 25 6. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 5, wherein the fluid release control component comprises a plug which is linearly moveable within the wetting mechanism between first and second positions corresponding to first and second configurations of the fluid release control component.

7. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 6, wherein the plug is configured to be at least partly withdrawn from the wetting mechanism to cause release of fluid from the holding chamber into the wetting chamber.
8. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 7, wherein the plug is, at least initially, positioned within the wetting chamber of the wetting mechanism and is configured to be at least partly withdrawn from the wetting chamber to cause release of the fluid from the holding chamber into the wetting chamber.
9. A wetting mechanism as claimed in any of claims 6 to 8, wherein the plug is configured such that it cannot be fully withdrawn from the wetting mechanism.
10. A wetting mechanism as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the fluid release control component comprises a container of fluid positioned within the holding chamber.
11. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 10, when dependent on claim 3, wherein the first configuration of the fluid release control component corresponds to a configuration wherein the container is intact, having the fluid contained therein, and the second configuration of the fluid release control component corresponds to a configuration wherein the container has ruptured or has otherwise been opened to release fluid therefrom.
12. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 10 or claim 11, wherein the wetting mechanism is configured such that the container may be ruptured or otherwise opened, in use, through user action on the housing.
13. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 12, wherein the housing is formed at least partly from a flexible, compressible and/or resilient material, and the wetting mechanism is configured such that the container may be ruptured or otherwise opened upon a user compressing, bending and/or flexing the housing.
14. A wetting mechanism as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the tip end of the catheter tube is, at least initially, disposed outside the wetting chamber and the wetting mechanism is configured such that the tip end of the catheter

tube is able to be introduced into the wetting chamber and moved therethrough, in-use.

15. A wetting mechanism as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the wetting mechanism is configured such that fluid released into the wetting chamber from the holding chamber is retained therein for wetting the catheter tube as it is moved therethrough, in use.
16. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 15, comprising a valve arrangement provided at an inlet and/or outlet of the wetting chamber in order to retain fluid contained therein.
17. A wetting mechanism as claimed in any preceding claim, configured to be coupled to a sleeve, and configured such that fluid released into the wetting chamber is able to flow into and along a coupled sleeve to wet the catheter tube, in use.
18. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 3, or any claim dependent thereon, wherein the fluid release control component is configured to prevent insertion of the catheter tube into and/or through the wetting chamber in the first configuration, and is configured to allow insertion of the catheter tube into and/or through the wetting chamber in the second configuration.
19. A wetting mechanism of any preceding claim, comprising a wetting applicator positioned within the wetting chamber configured to hold fluid released into the wetting chamber from the holding chamber.
20. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 19, wherein the wetting applicator is configured to control application of the fluid to the catheter tube, in use, as the catheter tube is moved through the wetting chamber.
21. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 20, wherein the wetting applicator defines a channel within the wetting chamber through which the catheter tube is able to be moved through, in use, and the wetting applicator is configured such that fluid held within the wetting applicator is able to be released therefrom upon movement of the catheter tube through said channel.

22. A wetting mechanism as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the housing forms a gripping element for the catheter.
23. A catheter, comprising: a catheter tube having a tip end and a distal end; and the wetting mechanism of any preceding claim operably coupled at or proximal to the tip end of the catheter tube for wetting the catheter tube, in use.
24. A catheter according to claim 23, which is a male urinary catheter.
25. A sealed packaged catheter according to claim 23 or claim 24, wherein the wetting mechanism is operably coupled at or proximal to the tip end of the catheter tube within the sealed package.
26. A method for wetting a tube of a catheter using the wetting mechanism of any of claims 1 to 22, the method comprising:
- operating the fluid release control component to cause the release of fluid from the holding chamber into the wetting chamber; and
- introducing the tip end of the catheter tube into the wetting chamber and moving it therethrough, thereby wetting the at least a portion of an outer surface of the catheter tube.