

CLAIMS

1. A wetting mechanism for wetting a tube of a male urinary catheter, the wetting mechanism comprising:
 - a housing forming a gripping element for the catheter, the housing being configured to be positioned initially at or proximal to the tip end of the catheter tube;
 - wherein the housing comprises 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; and
 - wherein the wetting mechanism comprises a wetting applicator positioned within the wetting chamber configured to hold fluid therein and release said fluid to wet the catheter tube upon movement of the tube through the wetting chamber.
2. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 1, wherein the wetting applicator comprises a flexible, compressible and/or resilient material, wherein the wetting applicator is deformable under the application of a force thereto; and wherein deformation of the wetting applicator cause releases of fluid held therein.
3. A wetting mechanism as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the wetting applicator comprises a sponge or foam material, operable to absorb the fluid, in use and/or a wicking material operable, in use, to draw the fluid therethrough for application to the catheter tube.
4. A wetting mechanism as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the wetting applicator defines a channel within the wetting chamber, or at least partially defines the wetting chamber of the wetting mechanism.
5. A wetting mechanism of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the tip end of the catheter tube is, at least initially, disposed outside the wetting chamber.
6. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 5, wherein the tip end of the catheter tube is, at least initially, held within an inlet of the wetting chamber.
7. A wetting mechanism of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the housing comprises a holding chamber containing a volume of wetting fluid therein, and wherein the wetting chamber is fluidly connected or connectable to the holding chamber, the wetting mechanism comprising a fluid release control component operable, in use, to control release of the fluid from the holding chamber into the wetting chamber.

8. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 7, wherein the fluid release control component is operable to control release of the fluid from the holding chamber onto and/or into the wetting applicator.
9. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 7 or claim 8, wherein the fluid release control component comprises a container positioned within or at least partially defining the holding chamber and having the fluid contained therein, and wherein the container is rupturable or otherwise openable to release fluid contained therein.
10. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 9, wherein the wetting mechanism is configured such that the container may be ruptured or otherwise opened, in use, upon a user compressing, bending and/or flexing the housing.
11. A wetting mechanism as claimed in any one of claims 7 to 10, wherein the fluid release control component comprises a moveable plug, moveable between a first position wherein it prevents release of the fluid from the holding chamber to the wetting chamber and/or the wetting applicator, and a second position wherein it allows release of the fluid from the holding chamber to the wetting chamber and/or the wetting applicator.
12. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 11, wherein the plug is linearly moveable or is rotatable between first and second positions.
13. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 11 or claim 12, wherein movement of the plug between first and second positions exposes or otherwise unblock one or more openings within the housing between the holding chamber and the wetting chamber, thereby releasing fluid from within the holding chamber and into the wetting chamber and/or into or onto the wetting applicator.
14. A wetting mechanism as claimed in any one of claims 11 to 13, wherein the plug is configured to be at least partly withdrawn from the wetting chamber of the wetting mechanism, partial withdrawal of the plug corresponds to movement of the plug from the first position to the second position, and the plug cannot be fully withdrawn from the wetting mechanism.
15. A wetting mechanism for wetting a tube of a male urinary catheter, the wetting mechanism comprising:
 - a housing forming a gripping element for the catheter, the housing being configured to be positioned initially at or proximal to the tip end of the catheter tube;

wherein the housing comprises 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; and

wherein the wetting mechanism is configured such that the catheter tube is wetted with wetting fluid contained within the housing upon movement of the tube through the wetting chamber.

16. A wetting mechanism as claimed in claim 15, wherein the wetting fluid is contained within a holding chamber within the housing, the holding chamber being fluidly connected to the wetting chamber and the housing comprises an opening or a port located between the holding chamber and the wetting chamber, and through which the wetting fluid may flow; and wherein the opening or port is configured such that the rate at which the wetting fluid may flow therethrough is limited by the surface tension of the wetting fluid.
17. A male urinary 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.
18. A catheter as claimed in claim 17, wherein the wetting applicator comprises a baffle arrangement and the catheter tube comprises, is integrated with, or is coated with a hydrophilic component.
19. A catheter as claimed in claim 18, wherein the baffle arrangement defines a plurality of subregions of the wetting applicator each configured to hold a portion of the fluid held within the wetting applicator.
20. A method for wetting a tube of a catheter using the wetting mechanism of any one of claims 1 to 19, the method comprising:
 - introducing the tip end of the catheter tube into the wetting chamber and moving it therethrough, causing release of the fluid from the wetting applicator thereby wetting the at least a portion of an outer surface of the catheter tube.