

**Completion of a new plant integrating spinning and assembly lines
for dry-pack polysulfone-membrane dialyzers**

Asahi Kasei Kuraray Medical has completed construction of a new plant in the Okatomi district of Nobeoka, Miyazaki, Japan, with integrated spinning and assembly lines to produce dry-pack APS™ polysulfone-membrane dialyzers. The newly completed plant raises the company's total APS™ dialyzer production capacity to 28 million modules/year.

Essentials of the new plant

Site: Okatomi, Nobeoka, Miyazaki

Groundbreaking: July 2007

Completion: November 2008

Hollow-fiber membrane spinning capacity: 6 million modules-equivalent/year

Dialyzer module assembly capacity: 5.5 million modules/year

Investment: ≈¥7.5 billion

The plant exclusively produces a new line of dry-pack APS™ dialyzers, which are not pre-filled with sterilized water prior to shipment. Integration of the hollow-fiber membrane spinning line and module assembly line in a single plant under unified quality control results high productivity and consistent product quality.

With its smaller sized and lighter weight modules, the new dry product line enables easier handling, requires less storage space, and results in lower material consumption both in the products themselves and in packaging. Reduced CO₂ emissions are achieved by the elimination of transport between separate membrane spinning and module assembly facilities, the lighter weight of products in shipment, and the smaller amount of material for incineration upon product disposal.

The market for dialyzers, also called artificial kidneys, is growing steadily throughout the world, as the number of hemodialysis patients increases and facilities for hemodialysis therapy become increasingly available. Demand growth is particularly strong for polysulfone-membrane dialyzers, due to their exceptional performance and biocompatibility.

Japan's leading dialyzer manufacturer, Asahi Kasei Kuraray Medical is focused on contributing to the advancement of hemodialysis therapy through the ongoing development of superior new products and production technologies, while meeting rising worldwide demand with timely expansions of production capacity. The new plant is part of an ongoing program of R&D and capital investments to heighten the trust and satisfaction of the hemodialysis community, to advance Japan's world-leading hemodialysis technology, and ultimately contribute to the quality of life for hemodialysis patients.

A second spinning line is under construction at the newly completed plant which will raise Asahi Kasei Kuraray Medical's polysulfone hollow-fiber membrane spinning capacity to 34 million modules-equivalent/year upon start-up in October 2009, further reinforcing the company's leading position as it accelerates the global expansion of operations.