

By MARTYN HALLE

SCIENTISTS have developed the first home-use laser device to stop pain. Laser technology has so far been restricted on safety grounds to hospitals and clinics. But now it is possible to deliver low-level laser energy for pain and the healing of injuries that can be safely used by the public.

Dr Martin Johnson, a GP and member of the Pain Society, says: 'A way was found to allow low levels of laser energy to be used to heal wounds and provide pain relief.'

He has used the device on himself and his family, and has also treated patients.

'It worked on inflamed muscles of the elbow, commonly known as tennis elbow, instead of using steroid injections. It would be useful for long-term chronic conditions such as osteoarthritis by those who are worried about taking inhibitor painkilling drugs, which have been linked to an increased risk of strokes or heart attacks.'

The laser, called Terraquant, has been proven to achieve rapid pain reduction and healing for a wide range of painful conditions, such as arthritis, back pain, joint diseases and spinal conditions as well as acute pain caused by strains and sprains.

It can be used regularly until pain relief is achieved, but most conditions respond after three or four sessions lasting five to ten minutes.

The laser reduces inflammation in joints by using heat to stimulate cells damaged by conditions such as arthritis. This increases the speed, quality and strength of cell tissue repair, increasing the blood supply to the affected area and stimulating nerve function.

It also develops collagen and muscle tissue, and helps to generate new healthy cells and tissue. Doctors say the laser can penetrate deeper under the skin than other devices such as ultrasound, which is why it can heal injuries more quickly.

In trials by Israeli neurologists, the hand-held device was found to be very effective when compared to treatments using drugs.

Dr Gavriel Selig, of the Sheba Health Centre in Tel Aviv, Israel, carried out a small trial on patients with osteoarthritis. All gained significant relief using the device.

'It is a very useful treatment. Our trial was blind, so those getting active laser treatment did not know until after the tests.'

Professor Samuel Edelman from the Weizman Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel, a world expert on osteoporosis, examined the device

Home laser for instant pain relief

and says it works as an effective way of relieving severe to moderate pain.

'Applying the probe to the painful site results in improved local circulation, improved supply of oxygen and removal of toxic waste products. The tissue is cured and pain disappears.'

Dafna Israeli of Terraquant, which already provide units to qualified health practitioners, chiropractors, osteopaths and nursing homes, says: 'We have had an enormous interest in the device for home use, particularly from sports professionals and people suffering from chronic pain conditions.'

Halina Woodridge, 57, from Jedburgh in the Scottish Borders and the managing director of an exhibitions company, decided to try the device after suffering back pain for 20 years.

AS I DID a lot of skiing and skating when I was young, I damaged my back by often falling over. But the injury to my spinal discs became apparent only in my 40s. My back locks if I turn or try to lift something heavy.

'In the past, I would be laid up for weeks until my back calmed down and I was able to start walking again. Consultants told me I would have to live with the problem because surgery wouldn't help.'

'Drugs such as steroids haven't speeded up the healing, and the pain has been excruciating.'

'I applied Terraquant to my back three or four times a day for three days and, by the end of the third day, I started to regain movement and the pain began to ease.'

'On the fourth day, I was able to ease myself into the car and drive to work. I was delighted — I've never recovered as quickly. To be up and about after less than a week.'



Relief at last: The low-intensity laser is safe for home use

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