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Medical gases

BEYOND COVID

As we look to a world beyond Covid-19, do the lessons of this pandemic leave our traditional view of medical oxygen markets in question?

EVERY BREATH COUNTS

Why oxygen is now part of the public health architecture

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: CYLINDERS • GAS ANALYSIS • DIGITISATION

10 minutes with...

Dr. Peter Biedenkopf

General Manager at INMATEC



Q Thanks for taking 10 minutes out with gasworld. What have we interrupted in your schedule today?

At the moment we are performing the technical acceptance of our newly designed PSA systems. In the future, all of our generators will be varnished in white with a 'table-white' base plate. The grey-coloured nitrogen systems, which are well known in the market, will end in 2021. With this measure we achieve two goals at the same time: service and maintenance will be much easier for the new consoles; and construction time is shortened significantly.

Tell us about your new role with INMATEC, and the company today...

I consider myself lucky that I could take over the management of INMATEC Gasetechnologie on 1st May. Together with the team, we will drive also the integration of INMATEC into the Xebec Group due to the fact that we are now part of a global company network that includes several companies in the gases industry. Supporting all employees in expanding our successful business to another 50 countries and creating synergies with the Xebec Group will be an important step for our growth.

We're familiar with the Xebec acquisition, what does that bring?

The Xebec Group comprises several companies in Canada, the US, Europe and Asia. INMATEC benefits from this global presence through synergies

in component purchasing, product sales and an expanded service network. Xebec's extensive network opens up new customer groups and new markets for us and we learn from their experience, especially with VPSA systems, which we do not offer yet. Together we can push environmentally-friendly gas supply solutions on a global scale and help to protect the environment by lowering the CO₂ (carbon dioxide) footprint of industrial clients.

It's our Medical Issue, and we know that INMATEC was part of the Covid-19 response last year with its products. Tell us how and where...

In 2020 we quickly adapted our production and switched about 50% of our manufacturing capacity to medical oxygen generators, which was possible since demand for nitrogen plants declined. Due to increasing inquiries, we supplied healthcare providers all over the world. In the course of the pandemic, over 200 medical oxygen generators have been delivered to India, Peru, Columbia, Great Britain, Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East, to name a few.

Do you believe the medical oxygen business has truly changed now?

Yes. The rising demand for oxygen led to a shortage of liquid oxygen in numerous countries due to limited logistics. Hospitals around the world have realised that it is key that oxygen supplies will have to be designed redundantly in the future in order to secure patient care.

In regions where medical LOX (liquid oxygen) is not available at all or only at high costs, pure PSA supplies comprising a redundant design with two systems and an additional storage tank will be the future technology.

We have also developed entire filling stations for medical oxygen and brought them to countries where filling stations for medical oxygen based on LOX are not available. These complete systems allow for the production of medical oxygen including filling into 200/300 bar cylinders without the need for a liquid oxygen supply. Thus, we bring medical oxygen even to regions where ASUs are far away or not present.

Do you believe medical gases will now be a high-growth market in the future?

Absolutely. Independence and carbon footprint are major topics and will play an increasingly important role, especially in industrialised countries. In addition, there are ongoing discussions about noise and fine dust caused by truck transport. PSA technology enabling customers to produce industrial gases onsite has a great disruptive potential in this context.

With travel restrictions easing, what's the likely first stamp in your passport?

Since the early bird catches the worm, I already paid a visit to a distributor and a potential new supplier in Turkey this year. Right after the summer vacation I will visit our sales company in Dubai, with a connecting flight to a trade fair in Singapore. [gw](#)