Press release

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Audiologists confirm that cerumen and moisture ingress are most significant causes of accidental hearing aid damage

P2i to initiate industry discussion following *Big Issues in Hearing Aids* online opinion survey.

In an online opinion survey of audiologists conducted by P2i, the world leader in liquid repellent nano-coating technology, 58% of respondents ranked cerumen ingress as the most significant cause of accidental hearing aid damage leading to product return, while 40% ranked moisture damage from sweat as the most significant cause.

Users wearing hearing aids while undertaking active sports or recreational activities were risk factors survey respondents most associated with causing moisture damage, and 96% agreed that there is a growing expectation among hearing aid wearers that devices should 'keep up' with their active lifestyles.

The **Big Issues in Hearing Aids 2011** survey was commissioned by P2i to establish the key issues of concern to everyone who treats hearing loss, conducts research into its causes or develops products and services to help patients, and will be used by the company to direct a new forum for industry discussion. Initially conducted with audiologists, P2i is also extending the survey to hearing aid manufacturers, with a view to examining the evolving relationship between the two communities, as well as their take on industry "hot topics".

"Through supplying three of the largest hearing aid manufacturers with our Aridion™ liquid repellent nano-coating, which now protects more than 4 million hearing aids worldwide, P2i sits in a unique position directly between the dispensing needs of audiologists on the one hand, and the manufacturing challenges of hearing aid manufacturers on the other," comments **Dr Stephen Coulson, Chief Technical Officer at P2i**. "From both sides we're hearing opinions that the industry is changing fast, on a global scale. How the industry is changing, and how fast is still largely to be determined.

"Our *Big Issues in Hearing Aids 2011* survey is an attempt to gain fresh insights into technology developments and the relationship between hearing aid manufacturers and audiologists, with a view to initiating industry discussion around our findings."

Other key findings of the survey included:

- 82% of respondents agreed that hearing aids will continue to get smaller, with 60% acknowledging batteries as the most limiting factor in further miniaturization;
- 86% felt that there would be a significant number of Bluetooth equipped hearing aids available on the market by 2015;
- Almost half (48%) agree that a greater proportion of people will consider 'off-the-shelf' hearing aids in the same manner as ready-to-wear reading glasses in the future, with 68% agreeing that this poses a threat to future growth and health of the audiology profession.

What is Aridion™?

Aridion™ is P2i's revolutionary liquid repellent nano-coating for hearing aids. It provides unbeatable protection against corrosion damage, reducing warranty failure and repair costs and ultimately increasing user confidence.

Aridion™ is applied using a special pulsed ionised gas (plasma), which is created within a vacuum chamber, to attach a nanoscopic polymer layer – one thousand times thinner than a human hair – to the hearing aid. This dramatically lowers the product's surface energy, so that when humidity, sweat or oleus substances come into contact with it, they form beads and simply roll off.

Plus, because Aridion™ can coat every aspect of a finished product at the nanoscopic level, it protects much more thoroughly than alternative approaches where individual product components are treated prior to assembly. The result is a truly durable liquid repellent coating that does not affect the product's look, feel or delicate acoustic properties.

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Notes for Editors

About P2i

P2i is the world leader in liquid repellent nano-coating technology. It was established in 2004 to commercialize liquid-repellent treatments developed by the UK's Ministry of Defence. Now on a commercial scale, P2i's

patented process has been successfully applied to a wide range of products in a wide range of markets including lifestyle, electronics, military and institutional, life sciences, energy and filtration.

In consumer sectors, the presence of P2i's technology is indicated either by ion-mask™, its brand for footwear, outdoor clothing and accessories, or Aridion™, its brand for electronics.

See www.p2i.com for more information. Corporate enquiries to:
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How the P2i technology works

P2i's technology works by applying a nanometer-thin polymer layer over the entire surface of a product. Using an ionized gas (plasma) this layer is molecularly bound to the surface and will not leach away. The process confers superior oil *and* water repellency by reducing the surface energy to ultra-low levels – down to one third that of PTFE (polytetrafluoroethylene). In footwear and textile applications, P2i's technology also minimizes liquid absorption from outside elements and evaporated perspiration.

Tests show that P2i's patented nano-coating technology can deliver performance benefits for a wide range of materials, including polymers, metals, fabrics, leather, ceramics, glass and paper. Even complex, 3D objects incorporating several different materials can be treated successfully with the P2i process: from footwear to hearing aids, bio-consumables to filtration.