

PE1517/A

Professor Tom Joyce Email of 23 March 2014

There are three major on-going crises with medical implants, metal-on-metal hips, PiP breast implants and polypropylene mesh implants. Each case has raised questions over how these implants are brought to market and how their performance within patients is monitored. There have been government led investigations in many countries into problems associated with these implants. A key issue is what is known as the 'precautionary principle'; if there is a chance of harm by an item then its use is stopped while the potential problem is investigated. We see this precautionary approach in cars and in aircraft with thousands of vehicles brought back to be checked and planes grounded while investigations are undertaken. Yet the same precautionary approach does not appear to happen when there are concerns with medical implants. This should change. When major concerns exist, implantation of specific medical devices should stop and evidence be gathered and assessed so that an informed decision on benefits and risks can be made. Patient safety has to be prioritised.

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