

## **Statement on the status for the ABL test (EDANA NWSP 354.0 and the related national standards)**

In 2008 Edana has published the standard procedure NWSP 354.0 for a test method, called the Absorption Before Leakage (ABL) test. This method has been developed for testing adult incontinence products for moderate and severe incontinence, that are to be used by bedridden patients. The method is designed for 'all in ones' (AiO's) also called briefs, with sizes XS, S, M, L and XL, and pads (held in place by elastic mesh briefs or other close-fitting underwear) with Absorption Before Leakage (ABL) values between 300 and 1100 g.

The test method was also released in some countries as a national standard and as from 2014 an ISO working group has started to draft the international standard ISO/CD 19331. Through that work some characteristics and limitations of the test method have been observed. It became obvious, that the test performs most reliably for products in size M, so matching the size of the mannequin that is used for the test. For other sizes the accuracy of the test is considerably lower and through various round robins the reproducibility has shown not to meet the expectations of the working group. Efforts have been made to remedy the root causes of the deviating results, such as training of the lab technicians, understanding the differences in the properties and dimensions of test equipment, the aging effect of the mannequins, the conditioning of the products and so forth. The exclusion of certain sizes was an attempt to improve the accuracy but came at the price of limiting the scope of the method even further.

In 2018 members of the associated Edana working group expressed to lose confidence that despite all efforts and modifications the International Standard can be developed and established with the desired level of accuracy. There was no consensus anymore to support the work of ISO/CD 19331 so that the further work of ISO/TC173/SC3/WG2 has been stopped with effect of March 2019.

The Edana working group concluded that the concerns regarding ISO/CD 19331 do apply also for the existing NWSP 354.0 and intends to revise NWSP 354.0 taking the learnings from the ISO 19331 project into account. Edana will publish a Q&A document for the proper use of NWSP 354.0 and will inform on upcoming revisions and decisions for the ABL test in due time. Edana advises also the national bodies for existing national standards of the ABL test to consider a revision under the given circumstances.

The Edana working group has expressed the desire to establish a way of testing for incontinence products that is more meaningful than the widely used ISO 11948 (Rothwell method) and that reflects on more user relevant performance aspects. The ABL test method serves for this purpose but could not provide the targeted level of accuracy. The working group in Edana is committed to look for superior alternatives.