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Novel newborn screening kits developed by NovaUCD-based Enzolve Technologies

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Enzolve Technologies, a UCD spin-out company based at NovaUCD the Innovation and Technology Transfer Centre at University College Dublin, has received substantial investment from Enterprise Ireland under the National Development Plan (2007-2013) and private investors. This investment will enable it to commence production of 'NeoScreenPak', a range of diagnostic kits for screening a variety of disorders that affect newborn infants. The initial test in the 'NeoScreenPak' range will screen for phenylketonuria (PKU) and each kit will contain sufficient materials to allow up to 1,000 newborns to be tested.

The screening of newborn infants for a variety of disorders that seriously damage their long term health is well established in economically developed countries but less so in under-developed countries. In Ireland all newborns are routinely tested for five common disorders, phenylketonuria (PKU), maple syrup urine disease, homocystinuria, galactosaemia and congenital hypothyroidism. If left undetected and untreated any of these disorders will cause long term and serious impairment to the infant.

'NeoScreenPak' is a single format test-package which will be used to screen for seven of the eleven most commonly screened disorders affecting newborns, thus eliminating the necessity for completely different set-ups for screening each of these conditions. Professor Paul C. Engel, Director of Enzolve Technologies and UCD's Professor of Biochemistry, said, "The 'package deal' aspect of Enzolve's screening kits is really compelling. It makes it easy to use by hospital laboratory staff and it is cost effective, which is very important in less economically developed countries."

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