

Leading Minimally Invasive Surgery (MIS) vet Romain Pizzi has revealed how he has used Surgical Innovations (SI) instruments to carry out keyhole surgery on penguin's that had swallowed foreign objects.

The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) vet, a pioneer in using MIS techniques, spoke of the operations whilst presenting his work at the 8th International Penguin Conference in Bristol.

He added that 'Gentoo' penguins are very inquisitive, and over the years have swallowed anything from sticks, twigs, stones, gloves, children's socks, lolly pop sticks, batteries, a broken broom handle and coins.

Over the years, Romain has carried out several minimally invasive endoscopic surgical procedures in penguins; many of which he was able to use SI's instruments such as the PretzelFlex™, the world's first pretzel shaped organ retractor.

The PretzelFlex™ 3mm is part of SI's 'Ultra' MIS range, which have been specially designed to allow surgeons and veterinary surgeons, like Romain, to perform operations through small 3mm holes; wounds that heal rapidly.

PretzelFlex™ is inserted straight through a 3mm cannula before the innovative 'pretzel' shape is formed and locked rigidly into place. The pioneering device is renowned for its impressive strength and stability to support large organs and provides clinicians with improved access and visualisation of surgical sites.

Speaking at the congress, Romain said: "Minimally invasive techniques (MIS) hold notable advantages over open surgery, including small wounds, rapid recovery, minimal post-operative pain, rapid healing, and low rates of wound complications. New cutting-edge instruments such as the 3mm PretzelFlex™ are brilliant and now allow operations to be performed that were pretty much impossible until recently, especially in difficult patients such as penguins."

"These advantages also allow a more rapid return to water, important in aquatic animals such as penguins, whose natural behaviour is to spend much of their time swimming. Endoscopy also provides magnified visualisation of organs as well, as some anatomic regions are difficult to adequately visualise in open surgery. I am pleased to say the penguins in question were fine and were able to get back into the water soon after surgery."

Graham Bowland, CEO of Surgical Innovations, said: "I am delighted that once again our laparoscopic instruments have helped Romain in his operative techniques on the animals at Edinburgh Zoo. Such operations help promote the zoo as a pioneering centre for wildlife and minimally invasive surgery and firmly establish Minimally Invasive Surgery as a viable proposition for animals of all sizes, including Penguins."