## **Polymer Platelets for Leaky Pipes**

Written by Administrator Tuesday, 18 June 2013 00:11 -

Polymer platelets for leaky pipes described in *New Scientist*, 23 December 2006, p29. A technology company in the UK is developing polymer blobs that can form a temporary plug on leaking pipes in a similar way that platelets help stop blood leaking from damaged blood vessels. The blobs can be introduced into the pipes upstream from the leak and will flow along the pipe until they come to the damaged area where they clump together in the hole in the pipe. So far the blobs have been tested in oil pipelines and the company hopes to test them in water pipes. Different sizes and polymer compositions will be needed for different liquids as they need to be neutrally buoyant.

Editorial Comment: It has already taken creative design to develop these blobs and will require more intelligent engineering to perfect them for different types of liquids and pipes. When engineers perfect them they still won't have anything that is as sophisticated as real platelets. As long as blood vessels are intact they are not needed, and they float around as individual items in the blood not doing anything. As soon as a blood vessel wall is damaged, nearby platelets change their surface properties so that they adhere to the vessel wall and to each other. They also send out signals to attract other platelets, blood clotting proteins and cells that clean up damaged tissue and repair the defect. When a vessel is damaged it is too late to make new platelets. Any living thing trying to evolve platelets would bleed to death first. Platelets are a good example of plan and purpose, not evolution by chance random processes. (Ref. hydraulics, bio-engineering, biomimicry)

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