

Drug-injecting battlefield gadget could cut civilian knife fatalities

◆ Soldiers are to be issued blood-clotting injectors to save lives on the battlefield. The autoinjector will allow them to self-administer life-saving drugs at the push of a button.

The Government intends the technology, once proven by soldiers, to be used by all first responders, in an attempt to reduce deaths from rapid blood loss such as from knife attacks.

Gavin Williamson, the Defence Secretary, said the £5 million investment would have “an immediate impact in terms of reducing the number of deaths on the battlefield”.

When the body bleeds it forms a clot, but then tries to break down that clot. The autoinjector uses tranexamic acid (TXA) to stop the body breaking down clots formed after major trauma.

Lt Col Chris Wright, a consultant in emergency medicine, said: “This is something you could give to every police officer, lifeguard or other first aider. Post-partum haemorrhage kills lots of women worldwide after childbirth. This could stop a third of those deaths if given to midwives.”

Lt Col Wright, a veteran of 12 tours in Afghanistan, said the autoinjectors would be game changing on the battlefield. “The more severely injured the patient, the more chance this has of saving their life. Take an Afghan example, with two legs blown off, it can save up to 25 per cent of those that would otherwise die.”

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