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Battlefield treatment helps rescuers save climber after fall

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Stannage Edge, scene of the Saturday rescue. Photo: Darren Copley

Mountain rescuers used an innovative medical treatment to help save the life of a climber at the weekend.

Edale Mountain Rescue Team was called to Stannage Edge where a 25-year-old from Lincoln had suffered life-threatening injuries in a fall while abseiling on the popular climbing edge near Hathersage in the Peak District. The man had substantial, life-threatening bleeding after falling 8m (26ft) on the Saturday of the Easter weekend.

The rescue team used Celox to stem the blood flow from the climber's wounds. The treatment, which contains a natural polymer derived from shrimp shells, coagulates blood in about 30 seconds and has been developed for battlefield wounds. The Edale team believes it is the first time the treatment has been used in mountain rescue in this country.

A spokesperson for the team said: "Having been stabilised on scene, the patient was evacuated to the

top of the crag before being taken to the Northern General Hospital by the Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire Air Ambulance.

"The injured climber is now in a stable condition in hospital following emergency surgery on his pelvis and wrist."

The team also put new techniques into practice the previous day, Good Friday, the SAM Pelvic Sling™ was used on a climber who fell from the Valkyrie route on Froggatt Edge, 8km (5 miles) south of Stannage, near Grindleford.

He was placed on a spinal board and carried to the crag top before being flown to hospital in Sheffield by the Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland Air Ambulance.

The two rescues came as members of the Edale MRT were out fundraising in Hathersage, Edale and Bakewell.

The team spokesperson said: "The successful outcome of both rescues was the result of excellent teamwork between Edale MRT, the East Midlands Ambulance Service and our local air ambulance charities.

"In addition to the two rescues, the team raised more than £2,500 over the course of the weekend – a very busy and successful Easter!"