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Benefits of subretinal implants revealed

24 September 2010

Findings from Retina Implant AG's first human clinical trial of subretinal electronic implants have revealed that useful vision can be restored and a significant cost-benefit to the patient's quality of life gained. These outcomes were discussed in two oral presentations at the recent The Eye and The Chip 2010 meeting in Detroit, USA.

The first presentation by Dr Eberhart Zrenner, Institute for Ophthalmic Research at the University of Tübingen, Germany, demonstrated the clinical trial results of the subretinal electronic implants in patients with retinitis pigmentosa (RP). It began in November 2005 when 11 patients received 1500 pixel microchips implanted below the retina. Dr Zrenner concluded that using this level of microchip implantation that can move freely in the eye restores useful vision as well as the ability to read letters and form words.

"The data presented represents an important milestone in the fight to restore useful vision to individuals who are blind due to retinitis pigmentosa. It speaks to the patient's ability to easily begin benefiting from the subretinal implant even with little to no training," reported Dr Zrenner. It was also stated during the presentation that a second clinical trial has already begun at several European sites where the patients will receive a permanent implant.

Dr Walter-G. Wrobel, CEO of Retina Implant AG, discussed further data from the first clinical trial on the cost-benefit associated with the implantation during the second oral presentation. It was reported that there was a significant cost-benefit associated with the retinal implant for the patient's quality of life. "The primary goal of our first clinical trial was to provide useful vision to patients, but this study shows that such devices could be a cost-effective treatment for people blinded by retinal degeneration," confirmed Dr Wrobel.

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