Retina Implant AG at “Artificial Vision 2017” research congress in Aachen

Specialists discuss visual prostheses for blind people

(Reutlingen/Aachen) – Retina Implant AG presented the latest research results on its sub-retinal implant at the “Artificial Vision” conference in Aachen in early December. This international symposium on visual prostheses is organised by RWTH Aachen University. It is regarded as an unmissable European event for specialists in the field of “artificial vision”.

Research into artificial vision using prostheses has been under way since the 1960s. Following initial promising findings in the 1990s, major technological advances have led to further tangible results in the last few years. As early as 2008, a previously completely blind patient was able to make out his name, written in 8 cm white letters on a black background, using the subretinal implant from Reutlingen-based Retina Implant AG. Since then, the expectations placed on the electronic implants have increased continuously. Most patients with an implanted chip can identify light sources, which makes it easier for them, for example, to find their way around a room again.

“Now our job is to meet the high expectations raised by our initial successes,” explained Dr. Alfred Stett, CTO of Retina Implant AG. “We’ve been able to sufficiently prove that our implant can restore partial sight to people who perceive very little or no light as a result of retinitis pigmentosa. At ‘Artificial Vision’, we had extensive discussions about the technical and medical challenges that still need to be overcome.” These include the service life of implants, which need to function in the body without a hermetic casing over many years, vision-training and rehabilitation after the implant has been activated as well as re-implantations. “Once again, the symposium showed there is now a very wide range of different technical and surgical methods for implants. However, the experts all agreed that visual prostheses offer real prospects for patients who became blind as a result of a degenerative retinal disease.”
About retinitis pigmentosa
Retinitis pigmentosa (RP) is a degenerative disease of the retina that causes the destruction of photo receptors in the retina and in most cases leads to total blindness in the final stage. It is regarded as a “rare disease”, yet affects 30,000 to 40,000 people in Germany alone and around three million individuals worldwide.

About Retina Implant AG
Retina Implant AG researches and develops innovative treatments and hightech products for people suffering from retinitis pigmentosa (RP). The subretinal RETINA IMPLANT Alpha AMS can help blind patients regain a certain degree of useful sight. The microchip has CE certification and is implanted beneath the retina (subretinally) at specialist RI implantation centres. Transcorneal electrical stimulation (TES treatment) with the RI OkuStim® system offers RP patients with sufficient residual vision the opportunity to slow down the progression of the disease. The company, based in Reutlingen, employs around 45 people and is managed by Reinhard Rubow (CEO and speaker of the Management Board), Jürgen Klein (Member of the Board, Sales & Marketing) and Dr. Alfred Stett (CTO, Member of the Board).

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