# First Patient in Asia Regains Useful Sight After Receiving Retina Implant AG’s Microchip

The Associated Press

REUTLINGEN, Germany & HONG KONG--(BUSINESS WIRE)--May 3, 2012-- Retina Implant AG ("Retina Implant"), a leading developer of subretinal implants for the visually impaired, today announced that the first patient in China to be implanted with its microchip on February 13, 2012 at the University of Hong Kong Eye Institute has since regained useful sight.

The University of Hong Kong Eye Institute is partnering with Retina Implant to be the leading clinical trial site in Asia to test its microchip in three patients who have been rendered legally blind from the degenerative condition retinitis pigmentosa (RP). This development expands Retina Implant's multi-center study which involves leading sites in Germany, the UK, Hungary, Italy and the United States. The Hong Kong study site is being led by Professor David Wong, chair professor in Ophthalmology and director of the Eye Institute, University of Hong Kong.Professor Wong is a seasoned clinical researcher and has led several randomised trials in the related areas of retinal detachment and age-related macular degeneration.

"I have always believed that the subretinal chip implant offers the best chance of success in our quest for artificial vision," said Professor David Wong. "After months of careful preparation, we are very excited to carry out the first implantation in a Chinese patient, marking the first such procedure outside of Germany. The whole team is delighted with how smoothly the surgery went and we are particularly excited by the amazing early results, which prove that patients of this previously incurable condition can in fact regain at least some site." The patient, Mrs. Tsang Wu Suet Yun, has been legally blind for 15 years, and experienced a sharp deterioration over the last few years.

Prior to the surgery, she was able to see almost no light at all.

Despite this, she had adapted to her condition and continued to live a very productive and capable life. She works as a masseuse and at home, prepares dinner for the family every day - in almost total darkness.

Following the procedure in which she received Retina Implant's microchip, she can see light and dark. In the laboratory, she was even able to read letters projected on a screen.

Professor Wong says, "Having been blind for so long, Mrs. Tsang has to learn to see once again. It is like a baby learning to walk." The patient has had to practice hand-eye coordination and learn to control her eye movement in order to fix her sight at appropriate targets.

Retina Implant's subretinal approach to implantation involves placing a 1500 electrode microchip just below the retina, specifically in the macular region. Results of Retina Implant's first human clinical trial were published in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B and showed placement of the implant below the retina, in the macular region, provided optimum visual results allowing patients to recognize foreign objects and to read letters to form words.

Post-implantation, the microchip is turned on - this is when the evaluation of sight restoration begins. As patients must develop new internal processes for interpreting the images they see, it typically takes several weeks to fully realize their new sight capabilities.

"My eyesight was lost for 15 years because of retinitis pigmentosa.

Although I am used to living in darkness, I still hope I can see again one day," said Mrs. Tsang Wu Suet Yun. "I am so fortunate to be chosen as the first Chinese patient to receive this surgery, and I am very grateful for the results I have achieved so far. After several weeks of training, I can already see light and object outlines. And I am able to make more sense of the environment around me. It is truly encouraging for my family and of course for me as well!" "The University of Hong Kong Eye Institute is a hub of innovation when it comes to ophthalmic research, making it the ideal partner as we expand our research globally into Asia," said Dr. Walter-G Wrobel, CEO, Retina Implant AG. "We congratulate Professor Wong and his team on a terrific start in the journey to bring a new solution to the hundreds of thousands of patients suffering from retinitis pigmentosa in China and around the world," adds Reinhard Rubow, executive vice president and CFO of Retina Implant AG.

About Retina Implant AG Retina Implant AG is the leading developer of subretinal implants for partially sighted and blind patients. After extensive research with German university hospitals and institutes which began with a large grant from the German Federal Ministry of Research and Education in 1996, Retina Implant AG was founded by Dr. Eberhart Zrenner and his colleagues in 2003 with private investors with the goal of developing a fully-functioning electronic retinal implant to restore useful vision to the blind. Retina Implant began implanting in human patients since 2005 and started a second, multi-center, global clinical trial in 2010. To learn more, visit: http://www.retinaimplant.de/ [1].

About the University of Hong Kong The University of Hong Kong (HKU)is the first and foremost tertiary institution in Hong Kong and was founded in 1911, incorporating the Hong Kong College of Medicine (est. 1887). The University was established to provide the highest level of education for the benefit of Hong Kong and China, and has a respected heritage of academic excellence. Being a comprehensive, research-led university and a world-class institution that focuses on both research and teaching, HKU is a focal point of intellectual and academic endeavors in Asia, and a gateway and forum for scholarship with the rest of the world.

About the University of Hong Kong Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine The University of Hong Kong (HKU) Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine is the longest established faculty

in the tertiary education in Hong Kong, which was founded 125 years ago. The Faculty is dedicated to innovative research with high scientific and translational values, thereby contributing to the development of Hong Kong into a biomedical research hub of the region. The results of the research work of Faculty members are published in distinguished international journals.

48 of the Faculty members are listed among the top 1 percent of scientists in their fields, according to the 2011 ISI's Essential Science Indicators.

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