

Latest bionic eye developments indicate bright future for ocular medical devices

12 January 2016 | Features | By BioSpectrum Bureau

Latest bionic eye developments indicate bright future for ocular medical devices



The recent announcement by the Clinical Ophthalmology Research Group at the University of Oxford that two patients were able to achieve some restoration of vision following implantation of the Alpha IMS device puts maker Retina Implant AG ahead of the pack in the bionic eye space, according to research and consulting firm GlobalData.

Mr Shashank Settipalli, GlobalData's Analyst covering Medical Devices, says: "These promising results, in conjunction with a string of positive developments for Retina Implant AG that included the CE mark and reimbursement approval in Germany for the first-generation Alpha IMS device, continue to bolster the company's standing in the burgeoning retinal prosthesis market."

The Alpha IMS implant features an array of photosensitive electrodes, which replace the function of damaged or dead cellular photoreceptors.

The device is implanted directly in the retina and is powered by a small, subcutaneous battery placed behind the ear.

The analyst continues: "Retina Implant AG's technology has distinct advantages over Second Sight, its biggest competitor in the retinitis pigmentosa space, and maker of the Argus II system, which was approved nearly half a decade ago to offer some relief from ocular problems caused by the condition.

"Unlike the Argus II, the Alpha IMS device does not require an external camera or video processing unit. By leveraging these advantages and positive clinical results, Retina Implant AG has ample opportunities to expand its presence in the ocular devices space."

Despite recent progress, visual impairment remains one of most debilitating indications under-addressed by the medical devices market.

However, as more ocular devices gain regulatory and reimbursement approval in global markets, medical device firms have much to gain in a dynamic medical technology arena, according to GlobalData.

Mr Settipalli concludes: "Start-up and mid-size ophthalmic device companies could appeal to investors encouraged by recent developments, whereas the larger multinational firms may seek new growth strategies through acquisitions and strong research and development efforts.

"GlobalData anticipates sustained growth in the ocular devices market as novel technologies continue to attract attention for the foreseeable future."