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EYE PROBLEMS & DISEASES

Glaucoma News

Now in Development: Shunt/Laser Combination Reduces Eye Pressure Associated with Glaucoma

BOSTON, April 2005 — Surgeon training began in early 2005 for a new glaucoma treatment system that combines laser surgery with insertion of an ultra tiny device (shunt) to relieve internal eye pressure (intraocular pressure or IOP) typically associated with the disease.

The Boston firm of SOLX Inc. announced that surgeon training began in February in Madrid, Spain, where the DeepLight Glaucoma Treatment System has been approved as an investigational device. The glaucoma treatment system currently is undergoing clinical trials in the United States.

IOP control usually is necessary to prevent progression of glaucoma, which can damage the optic nerve that transmits images from the eye to the brain. SOLX officials say their new glaucoma therapy uses the system's Titanium Sapphire Laser and Gold Shunt in any combination the eye surgeon deems necessary to reach a targeted IOP.

"This gives physicians a wide range of [eye] pressure reduction options while reducing or eliminating the need for glaucoma medications," said Gabriel Simon, M.D., in a company news release. Simon is director of ophthalmic research at the Boston University Photonics Center, which was the lead developer of technology creating the DeepLight Glaucoma Treatment System.

The SOLX laser system works on principles similar to Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT) by targeting specific pigmented cells to help open up the eye's drainage system to relieve IOP. But preliminary studies indicate the SOLX laser may have deeper penetration in targeting selected cells.

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