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PRESS INFORMATION

MED-EL Medical Electronics

MED-EL, headquartered in Innsbruck, Austria, is a leading provider of hearing implant systems. The business was founded by Ingeborg and Erwin Hochmair in the 1980s. Today, MED-EL offers the widest range of implantable and non-implantable solutions for various types and degrees of hearing loss.

The history of the company: A vision realized

The foundations of MED-EL were laid in the 1970s at the Technical University of Vienna, where scientists Ingeborg and Erwin Hochmair were researching the basic prerequisites for stimulating nerve fibres with electrical signals and sound processing technologies.

Building on this research, they went on to develop the world's first micro-electronic multi-channel cochlear implant, which was implanted in a patient by surgeon Professor Kurt Burian in December 1977. This success encouraged the Hochmairs to continue developing and improving their cochlear implant technology. Ultimately, the early developmental success prompted them to found MED-EL, taking on the first employees in 1990.

Today, MED-EL is represented in 124 countries worldwide with more than 95 percent of the company's hearing implants exported and used by more than 4000 clinics across the world. MED-EL continues to be a privately-owned, company allowing it to focus on innovative products that help patients overcome hearing loss as a barrier to communication and quality of life.

Research, design & development: Safeguarding our hearing future

Since its inception, MED-EL has continuously invested in research, design and development of its hearing solutions, investing between 15 to 20% of the company's turnover in R&D.

New standards in technology and industry and world "firsts" demonstrate MED-EL's consistent commitment to innovation. Some of the most exciting advancements include:

- EAS technology (Electric Acoustic Stimulation), which can significantly improve the quality of life for people with partial deafness
- The lightest and smallest titanium cochlear implant available on the market
- Sound coding technologies (Fine Hearing™), which provide the fine details of sound
- The first ever single-unit cochlear implant processor, RONDO, which was updated in 2017 to include wireless charging capabilities
- The development of BONEBRIDGE, the world's first active bone conduction implant
- The launch of ADHEAR, a novel bone conduction system that is fully non-implantable

The key to MED-EL's success in research and innovation is the close and interdisciplinary collaboration between highly qualified researchers and developers (in the area of engineering, software, physics, chemistry and medicine). This cooperation provides the basis for the development of innovations aimed at safeguarding and further expanding MED-EL's leading position. Furthermore, MED-EL participates in numerous EU research programmes and fosters applied research activities via cooperation projects with more than 100 research institutions worldwide.

The world of sound: The widest range of hearing systems

MED-EL offers the widest range of implantable and non-implantable solutions to treat all degrees of hearing loss; enabling people in 124 countries enjoy the gift of hearing with the help of a MED-EL device. MED-EL's hearing solutions include cochlear and middle ear implant systems, a combined Electric Acoustic Stimulation hearing implant system, auditory brainstem implants as well as surgical and non-surgical bone conduction devices.

Milestones

1975 Cochlear implant development started by MED-EL founders Ingeborg and Erwin Hochmair.

1977 The world's first microelectronic multi-channel cochlear implant is implanted in Vienna.

1989 Introduction of the COMFORT cochlear implant.

1990 MED-EL hires its first employees.

1991 MED-EL launches the world's first BTE (behind-the-ear) speech processor.

1994 Introduction of the COMBI 40 implant system. It is the world's first 8-channel high rate CI.

1995 Introduction of the CIS LINK system.

1996 Introduction of the COMBI 40+, the thinnest cochlear implant available.

First bilateral implantation for stereo hearing.

1999 Launch of the TEMPO+ behind-the-ear (BTE) speech processor.

2003 Acquisition of the VIBRANT SOUNDBRIDGE, the first implantable middle ear hearing device for mild to severe sensorineural hearing loss.

2004 MED-EL launches the PULSAR cochlear implant, providing future-ready electronics in a ceramic housing.

2005 Introduction of the MED-EL DUET EAS Speech Processor in Europe. EAS is the first hearing implant system worldwide to integrate cochlear implant audio processing and acoustic amplification in one compact device.

2006 MED-EL launches the OPUS family of speech processors.

Launch of the SONATA Cochlear Implant, with new small titanium housing, and the FLEX electrode arrays for all implant types.

2007 Approval of EAS, the ideal solution for partial deafness.

Approval of the VIBRANT SOUNDBRIDGE for conductive and mixed hearing losses in Europe.

Launch of the DaCapo rechargeable battery system.

2009 EAS in the 2nd generation: European launch of the DUET 2 Audio Processor.

Europe-wide introduction of AMADÉ, the new audio processor for the VIBRANT SOUNDBRIDGE.

2010 New MAESTRO System introduced in Europe including the CONCERTO Cochlear Implant and MAESTRO System Software 4.0 featuring the new FS4 and FS4-p coding strategies.

2012 Launch of OPUS 2XS, the smallest and lightest audio processor to date. As part of the MAESTRO Cochlea Implant, this processor allows for an increase of efficiency by 30 percent in difficult listening situations.

Launch of the BONEBRIDGE, the world's first active bone conduction implant system.

2013 Launch of the RONDO, the first single-unit processor for cochlear implants.

MED-EL receives CE mark approval for marketing cochlear implants for the indication of Single-Sided Deafness in children and adults as the first hearing implant company.

2014 Launch of the SYNCHRONY Cochlear Implant System which allows high-resolution MRI scans at 3.0 Tesla without the need for magnet removal.

Launch of the new generation of the VIBRANT SOUNDBRIDGE System, an active middle ear implant system, which is approved for MRI scans at 1.5 Tesla.

2015 CE mark approval for the SAMBA Audio Processor for VIBRANT SOUNDBRIDGE Middle Ear and BONEBRIDGE Bone Conduction Implant Systems.

The WaterWear accessory for behind-the-ear (BTE) audio processors, OPUS 2 and SONNET, is launched in Europe.

2016 MED-EL releases a series of innovative accessories for its SONNET audio processor – a mini battery pack and a rechargeable kit – making SONNET the world's lightest audio processor.

2017 MED-EL launches ADHEAR – a non-surgical bone conduction hearing solution for conductive hearing loss.

Launch of the RONDO 2, the world's first cochlear implant audio processor to feature wireless charging.

2018 OTOPLAN is launched. This revolutionary software manufactured by CAsCination allows surgeons to quickly generate patient-specific 3D reconstruction from CT images.

2019 Launch of the new SONNET 2 audio processor with automatic sound management 3.0 as well as the SYNCHRONY 2 Implant and the new BONEBRIDGE BCI 602.

Launch of AudioLink, Finetuner Echo, AudioKey and the Software MAESTRO 8.

2020 CE mark approval for the SAMBA 2 Audio Processor for VIBRANT SOUNDBRIDGE Middle Ear and BONEBRIDGE Bone Conduction Implant Systems.

Launch of the RONDO 3 Audio Processor.

2021 MED-EL becomes the first and only hearing implant company to offer an MRI guarantee. It guarantees that MED-EL cochlear implants won't be damaged during an MRI scan and is valid worldwide for all CIs since 1994.

Publication of the compendium "30 Years of Translational Research Behind MED-EL", providing insights into the milestones from thirty years of research partnerships concerning cochlear and brainstem implants (CI and ABI).

About MED-EL

MED-EL Medical Electronics, a leader in implantable hearing solutions, is driven by a mission to overcome hearing loss as a barrier to communication and quality of life. The Austrian-based, privately owned business was co-founded by award-winning industry pioneers Ingeborg and Erwin Hochmair, whose ground-breaking research led to the development of the world's first micro-electronic multi-channel cochlear implant (CI). Successfully implanted in 1977, it was the basis for what is known as the modern CI today. It also laid the foundation for the successful growth of the company in 1990, when MED-EL's first employees joined the Hochmair's to bring CIs to people across the world. To date, MED-EL has grown to more than 2,200 employees from around 75 nations and has offices in 30 locations worldwide.

The company now offers the widest range of implantable and non-implantable solutions to treat all types of hearing loss, enabling people in 124 countries to enjoy the gift of hearing with the help of a MED-EL device. MED-EL's hearing solutions include cochlear and middle ear implant systems, a combined Electric Acoustic Stimulation hearing implant system, auditory brainstem implant, as well as surgical and non-surgical bone conduction devices.

More than 95% of the hearing devices, which are produced in Austria, are exported all around the world to be used by more than 4,000 clinics. www.medel.com

Responsible for the content

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