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## Seeing is believing

### Arts/Life

By QMI AGENCY, SOURCES: SCIENCE DAILY, RETINA IMPLANT AG, WIKIPEDIA, INNOVITARESEARCH.ORG

Posted 2 days ago

What is retinitis pigmentosa (RP)?

A group of genetic eye conditions that leads to blindness. Night blindness generally precedes tunnel vision by years or even decades. Some with RP do not become legally blind until 40 or 50 years of age and still retain some sight all their lives, while others go completely blind from RP, in some cases as early as childhood.

Indications of RP

- \* Blotches of the retinal pigment epithelium with black bone-spicule pigmentation.
- \* Waxy pallor of the optic nerve head.
- \* Thinning of the retinal vessels, cellophane maculopathy, cystic macular edema and posterior subcapsular cataract.

Diagnosing RP

Inheritance of RP is determined by family

history. There are at least 35 different genes known to cause "nonsyndromic RP" -- RP that is not the result of another disease or part of a wider syndrome.

Treating RP

- \* Unfortunately, retinitis

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### **Retinitis pigmentosa**

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pigmentosa is incurable,

but progression of the disease can be reduced by daily intake of 4.5 mg of vitamin A palmitate.

\* Proper vitamin A supplementation could postpone blindness

by up to 10 years.

200,000 people worldwide suffer from blindness as a result of retinitis pigmentosa

Direct

stimulation electrodes

Sixteen electrodes for direct

retinal stimulation and assessment of the tissue-electrode interface. Direct stimulation of the retina is performed by single electrodes or patterns formed by the electrodes leading to perceptions described as well defined dots.

Location of the implant

Sits underneath the retina, replacing damaged/non-working light receptors caused by degeneration.

Limitations of the implant

The subretinal implant does not restore vision completely.

\* The image is in greyscale

\* Very low resolution: 38x40 pixels

\* Covers a small fraction of the normal vision field

\* External power supply is needed, adding extra weight to carry around

Microphotodiode array (MPDA)

Active part of the chip, approximately 3 mm square, contains 1,500 light sensitive pixels to perceive and localize light sources or large bright objects.

Subdermal cable unit

The chip is attached to a flexible silicone-embedded cable at the orbital rim which exits through the skin behind the ear and connects to a power supply and control unit.

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