

Successful premiere – “Incisions and insights” as an online workshop

## **Live chat with surgeons at the operating table**

**(Stuttgart/Tübingen) – Last Wednesday saw the first event in 2021 from the well-known workshop series “Incisions and insights” take place online, due to the pandemic. Hosted by Dr. Klaus Eichenberg and Anja Reutter from BioRegio STERN Management GmbH and Professor Bernhard Hirt, Medical Director of the Institute of Clinical Anatomy and Cell Analysis, it highlighted the day-to-day challenges at the operating table, this time focusing on “Endoscopy and robotics in diagnostics and surgery”. The event was live-streamed from the clinical anatomy operating theatre in Tübingen.**

“Four large surgeon’s hands and two small nostrils – that can be a problem,” says Professor Hirt, summing up the situation during the demonstration of minimally invasive frontal sinus surgery. After all, the surgical team has to feed the endoscope, camera, light, suction and drill all the way to the base of the skull to perform delicate procedures there, frequently over several hours. “Fewer cables” was just one of the wishes of the surgeons, who – as always – demonstrated the medical needs on an anatomical specimen.

The second operation, led by Professor Arnulf Stenzl, Medical Director of the Department of Urology and Director of the Inter-University Center for Medical Technologies Stuttgart-Tübingen (IZST) at the Universities of Tübingen and Stuttgart, used a prostatectomy to illustrate the difficulty of getting the right view during open surgery: “In this pelvic floor operation, only the surgeon sees the details – the team ultimately has to imagine the situation based on his/her description,” bemoans Stenzl.

Given that operations can last hours and utilise numerous instruments that must be held as steadily as possible in unnatural positions, Professor Hirt asked whether robots could in future perform the surgical procedures. “It will certainly take years to achieve completely autonomous surgery. And, like a pilot, a surgeon must always be able to

land a plane – or operate on a patient – without any robot assistance,” stresses Professor Stenzl. “But help from robots is already a way of conserving valuable medical resources.”

Digitalisation has brought radical technological changes to the sector, confirms Dr. Steffen Hüttner from the Verein zur Förderung der Biotechnologie und Medizintechnik e. V. (Society for the Promotion of Biotechnology and Medical Technology). “Whether augmented reality, virtual reality or artificial intelligence, the technology is frequently already there, but the challenge is to get used to it.”

Although the more than 160 participants – primarily developers from the medtech sector – were “only” online for this event, they were able to discuss ideas for instruments or methods directly with the medical practitioners in a live chat. After more than 60 minutes, Dr. Eichenberg thanked everyone for taking part in the successful premiere of the online workshop: “Incisions and insights is a truly live event. Today we were able to provide an insight in this exceptional format, but we’d be delighted if we could once again join the surgeons in person at the operating table here in June. At the same time, we’re offering new communication channels to keep the life sciences industry in the STERN BioRegion dynamic even under pandemic conditions.”

The workshop series is organised by the Inter-University Center for Medical Technologies Stuttgart-Tübingen (IZST) at the Universities of Tübingen and Stuttgart, BioRegio STERN Management GmbH and the Verein zur Förderung der Biotechnologie und Medizintechnik e. V. (Society for the Promotion of Biotechnology and Medical Technology). The next “Incisions and insights” workshop will take place on 30 June 2021, if possible back on site at the Institute of Clinical Anatomy and Cell Analysis in Tübingen.

#### **About BioRegio STERN Management GmbH:**

BioRegio STERN Management GmbH promotes economic development in the life sciences industry, helping to strengthen the region as a business location by supporting innovations and start-up companies in the public interest. It is the main point of contact for company founders and entrepreneurs in the Stuttgart and Neckar-Alb regions, including the cities of Tübingen and Reutlingen.

The STERN BioRegion is one of the largest and most successful bioregions in Germany. Its unique selling points include a mix of biotech and medtech companies that is outstanding in Germany and regional clusters in the fields of automation technology and mechanical engineering.

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