

## PRESS RELEASE



### **AcuSurgical, a French Robotics Company Developing a Novel Solution for Retinal Micro-Surgery, Announces Successful Completion of First Clinical Study**

**Montpellier/Gent, France – 4th July, 2024** - AcuSurgical, an innovative French medical device surgical robotic company supported by Mérieux Equity Partners, Supernova Invest, IRDI and UI Investissement, has announced the successful completion of its first clinical study involving the world's first dual-instrument ophthalmic surgical system. This study evaluated the Luca™ surgical robot for vitrectomy procedures, marking a significant milestone in introducing this groundbreaking technology to hospitals with the potential to improve care for millions of patients with retinal issues.

AcuSurgical's mission is to create the new standard of care in retinal procedures and to provide world-class treatment for the more than 300 million patients worldwide suffering from retinal disease, a debilitating condition that includes age-related macular degeneration (AMD), diabetic retinopathy and macular holes.

The company develops a robotic assistant that provides greater precision for retinal microsurgery (10  $\mu\text{m}$  instead of 100  $\mu\text{m}$  for the surgeon's hand). Retinal surgery is a very delicate procedure requiring highly precise treatments. The Luca™ system allows surgeons to treat more patients, address a wider range of pathologies, expedite training, and increase accuracy and safety. It is composed of 2 arms with an instrument holder at each end that are piloted by the surgeon via a console. Unlike other solutions, the robot adapts to the patient's position thanks to its digital RCM (Remote Center of Motion). AcuSurgical's innovative robotic platform also aims to bring a new paradigm to subretinal injections for cell and gene therapies with a precision robotic treatment delivery.

The clinical study was conducted at Gent University Hospital in Belgium by Dr. Fanny Nerinckx, a senior vitreo-retinal surgeon. Seven patients underwent high-precision robotic surgeries using the Luca™ system.

Dr. Nerinckx noted, “The Luca™ robot seamlessly integrated into our operating room workflow. We performed multiple surgeries in one day, efficiently executing core vitrectomy procedures in this first human clinical trial. We look forward to the next trial, where we will perform full vitreo-retinal surgeries on a larger patient cohort, and we also look forward to using the Luca™ robot for delivering subretinal gene therapy.”

Christoph Spuhler, CEO of AcuSurgical, stated, “Completing this first-in-human clinical study is a major milestone in making retinal surgery more accessible. It showcases our team’s dynamism and expertise, achieving this step just three years after presenting our initial proof of concept. However, this is only the beginning. Going forward, we will upgrade the platform with additional revolutionary features that will transform retinal surgeries.”

This successful clinical study marks a significant advancement for AcuSurgical in enhancing retinal surgery through innovative technology.

ENDS

**AcuSurgical Media Contacts:**

Pierre-Antoine FOREST / [press@acusurgical.com](mailto:press@acusurgical.com)/ 0033 4 11 92 00 22

**Mérieux Equity Partners Media Contacts:**

**CTcom (France):**

Sibylle Descamps / [sibylle.descamps@ct-com.com](mailto:sibylle.descamps@ct-com.com)  
Laure Schlagdenhauffen / [laure.schlagdenhauffen@ct-com.com](mailto:laure.schlagdenhauffen@ct-com.com)

**MHP (UK/International):**

James McFarlane / [james.mcfarlane@mhpgroup.com](mailto:james.mcfarlane@mhpgroup.com)  
Matthew Taylor / [matthew.taylor@mhpgroup.com](mailto:matthew.taylor@mhpgroup.com)

**About AcuSurgical:** Founded in 2020, AcuSurgical is a surgical robotics company based in Montpellier (France). AcuSurgical's mission is to enable top-class treatment for the 300+ million patients suffering from retinal disease worldwide. Retinal disease has a huge impact on the quality of life of mostly elderly patients, with 1 in 3 Europeans over 70 affected by these debilitating conditions including age-related macular degeneration (AMD), diabetic retinopathy and macular holes. Worldwide, currently 1.6 million retinal surgeries are performed each year, with a yearly growth rate of 7%. This currently represents only a small percentage of actual cases, with the majority of patients, especially in emerging economies, getting inadequate treatment or often no treatment at all. The cutting-edge robotics platform from AcuSurgical aims to change this, bringing a new surgical paradigm to vitreoretinal surgery based on precision robotics.

**About Mérieux Equity Partners:** Mérieux Equity Partners ('MxEP') is an AMF-accredited investment firm specialising in the healthcare sector. With over €1.5 billion in assets under management through two dedicated strategies: Innovation and Buyout, MxEP supports companies ranging from start-ups to established leaders. Based in Lyon and Paris, MxEP's team of investment professionals invest in companies with significant growth and transformation projects involving innovative healthcare products and services, providing them with the financial and operational resources they need to achieve their goals. MxEP has supported AcuSurgical since 2021. [www.merieux-partners.com](http://www.merieux-partners.com)

**About Supernova Invest:** Supernova Invest is the leading deep tech Venture Capital firm in France and Europe, managing €800+ million. The current portfolio includes 80+ impact startup companies that develop products and services leveraging breakthrough technologies. For 20 years, Supernova Invest has been providing long-term capital, operating experience, and strategic support to back sustainable growth of tomorrow's deep tech and industrial champions throughout the Venture Capital life cycle: seed, early, late and growth stages. Supernova Invest also gathers the entire deep tech value chain to support portfolio companies: industrials, corporate, research centers and co-investors. has supported Supernova Invest supports AcuSurgical since 2021. [www.supernovainvest.com](http://www.supernovainvest.com)

#### **About IRDI**

Based in Toulouse, Montpellier, and Bordeaux, Irdi Capital Investissement has been a key player in private equity for more than 40 years, with an investment track record in companies located in the south-west of France and at all development stages (venture capital and buyout). It manages more than €500 spread across several funds, including IRDINOV 2 (supported by the Fonds National d'Amorçage (FNA) - is a capital seed fund specialized in financing technological companies) and INN'VEST PME OCCITANIE EST (a co-investment fund supported by the European Investment Fund (EIF) and the Région Occitanie under the FOSTER TPE PME fund of funds) which were both leveraged to invest in AcuSurgical. [www.irdi.fr/](http://www.irdi.fr/)

#### **About UI Investissement**

Independent company and specialist in the development of unlisted French companies, UI has been committed and invested, for more than 50 years, alongside startup leaders, Growing SMEs and mid-caps to create and develop economically and sustainably successful companies. UI Investissement manages assets in the order of €1.5 billion and invests in 300 executives in sectors essential to society such as health, agribusiness or services and industry.

Upstream, the investment teams dedicated to innovation capital deploy funds that allow the emergence of innovative projects and disruptive technologies with high potential in tech and health by providing them with financing, advice and support. <https://www.ui-investissement.com/>