



After the smallest defibrillator, Sorin is set to launch the world's smallest pacemaker, confirming its desire for international growth

PARIS, 5 April 2007 (APM) – Sorin, the European company which launched the smallest defibrillator in 2006, is set to put the smallest pacemaker on the market, and with these devices and the functions they incorporate, is aiming for both considerable growth on the European market and penetration of the US market.

The Italian group, which specializes in devices for cardiac pathologies / diseases and whose Cardiac Rhythm Management line has a strong French component in ELA Medical, organized a press conference on Thursday to reveal its ambitions.

In 2006, the group was barely known in the field of implantable defibrillators when it launched Ovatio*, a defibrillator with a volume of 29 cm³, or "10 to 20% smaller" than the various other existing models, indicated André-Michel Ballester, President of the Cardiac Rhythm Management (CRM) subsidiary.

The interest aroused by this device helped to boost the turnover of the Sorin CRM affiliate by 17% (to €217.7 million, accounting for 28% of group sales) in 2006, a commercial year during which the market for CRM was particularly flat.

The new pacemaker, Reply*, should be available in May, specified Sophie Baratte, Managing Director of Sorin France. Its volume is 8 cm³, a reduction of 20% compared to other pacemakers.

In addition to being smaller, these devices also include other features developed by Sorin: SafeR*, software for pacemakers to stimulate the heart systematically and protect it by "listening" to its natural beat and stimulating it only on demand, and Parad* for defibrillators designed to reduce inappropriate shocks, indicated Catherine Picard, Vice-President of research and development with the CRM subsidiary.

Furthermore, while the life expectancy of pacemakers had decreased in recent years, dropping from 8–10 years to 5–6 years because of the addition of new energy-consuming properties, now, with reduced consumption, the pacemaker is once again designed to last for nine years.

The Sorin representatives also pointed out that the company is involved in the management of heart failure resynchronization, a field in which it was a pioneer, working in step with French rhythmologists.

Sorin is posting its ambitions on the strength of these innovations. Already placed among the "field leaders" in Europe on the pacemakers market, where it is in third place, the group would also like to move up to a leading position on the defibrillator market "in the next three years", André-Michel Ballester indicated to APM.

The other goal is to penetrate the American market, which accounts for 60% of the world market for the CRM, where Sorin is barely present right now although the "giants" in the sector, all American, are well installed.

"We'll have to split up the country", considers André-Michel Ballester. "We are going to concentrate on certain regions", and in the present case, on the "Megalopoles". This American setup will be a "long-term venture". It also involves partnerships with American specialists and the opening of a new research center in Minneapolis, a key city where the competition is also installed.

STIMULATION TO IMPROVE THE CARDIAC PUMP

In terms of development in the years to come, Sorin is aiming at a new field: "treating the heart like a pump and not just like a clock", according to Catherine Picard.

Until now, cardiac stimulators have only dealt with the electrical problems of the heart; in the near

future they could play a haemodynamic role too and be used to "improve the efficiency of the cardiac pump".

The goal of the SonR* sensor combined with a smart algorithm, intended for resynchronization devices for heart failure patients, is to measure in real time the cardiac contraction and adjust and optimize the stimulation permanently.

Another advantage of this sensor would be to monitor the evolution of the illness in real time. When combined with telemedicine, it could supply the cardiologist with regular information on the condition of the patient.

This system would "cover today's unmet needs", in particular for between 20 and 30% of patients for whom resynchronization is not efficient enough, underlines the Research Manager.

The initial version of SonR* should be available for resynchronization devices "around 2008", but the system should see gradual improvement over several years.

Also attending this press conference were Dr Philippe Ritter of Saint-Cloud and Dr Richard Isnard from Pitié-Salpêtrière, who talked about the challenges facing this therapeutic field.

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