

**FP548**

## **THE BIOSAFETY OF HYALURONATE (HEALON) FOR COCHLEAR IMPLANTATION**

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Insertion of the electrode array of multiple channel cochlear implants may be aided using Hyalurate. It is felt that this substance acts as a lubricant allowing the array to be inserted more deeply and less traumatically. This has potential advantages of improving pitch perception in cochlear implant patients. To investigate the biosafety of Hyaluronate an animal study was undertaken. Dummy electrodes were inserted into the cochleae of six normal hearing cats. Hyaluronate was used as a lubricant in one ear and the other ear served as a control. Measurement of hearing thresholds before and after surgery did not reveal hearing loss attributable to the Hyaluronate. The temporal bones from these cats were sectioned and the histological sections analysed for evidence of spiral ganglion cell or hair cell loss. Initial results have not demonstrated poorer spiral ganglion cell survival or greater hair cell loss in the group in which Hyaluronate was used.



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