

## The Story of Andrej from Riga, Latvia ó bilateral Cochlear Implantation



On 29. Juli 2006 my 23 year-old son Andrej was hit by a big disastrous accident. Our family lives in Riga, Latvia. During a holiday in Jurmala, my son witnessed a fight and tried to help a young man who was being attacked. Consequently, my son was hit on the head and fell hard onto the pavement. My son broke his neck and fractured both pyramids of the skull base, he suffered from a contusion of the brain and internal bleeding and had to be transferred to intensive care. The doctors struggled to keep him alive for over 24 hours. After that, extensive treatment was necessary, at first in hospital and then at home for months. Andrej's general state of health improved. However, Andrej remained deaf on both ears. The fractures had damaged his hearing nerves.

Unfortunately, the police have so far still not found the aggressors who made my son handicapped for life. We asked ourselves ó what can we do? How shall Andrej live from now on ó imprisoned in utter silence?

After numerous examinations and counseling sessions in clinics in Latvia and St. Petersburg, the doctors finally came to the unified conclusion that only one surgery could help Andrej, namely the creation of an artificial sense of hearing by means of a bilateral cochlear implantation.

One year ago, we were very lucky to meet Dr. Dr. h.c. Monika Lehnhardt in St. Petersburg. From the very first moment Dr. Lehnhardt showed a big and active interest in Andrej's destiny. She helped him to find the right cochlear implant model, the "Nucleus CI24RE". She recommended suitable and experienced clinics, at which this very complex bilateral surgery could be performed. We chose the Karol Marcinkowski University Clinic in Poznan, Poland.

The bilateral Cochlear Implantation was scheduled for the 29th July 2008, exactly 2 year after the disaster had happened. My son and I thought that this was a good omen.

As Andrej's case was very complex, it was decided that the director of the ENT-department, Prof. Dr. Witold Szyfter, a remarkable person and doctor very experienced in this and similar surgeries, should perform the surgery personally.

The surgery lasted 7 hours and was successful. A whole team of experienced surgeons and doctors were involved in the surgery. Dr. Lehnhardt travelled especially to Poznan, to attend the surgery.

My son and I are very grateful to the doctors and the whole staff of the ENT-department of the Clinic for the attentive treatment and care that was provided to my son after the surgery. The size and the comfort of the room, that my son had at the clinic surprised us very much by its equipment with own shower and bathroom as well as TV and telephone. All this made the whole atmosphere in the clinic very positive, which is important for every person after a serious surgery.

One month after the surgery Andrej's cochlear implants were "switched-on" for the first time in the same clinic in Poznan. In the meantime my son can lead a "normal" life again. He can hear! At the beginning of September Andrej got married; it was a big and funny marriage and my son is a happy man again.

All this would not have been possible without the active help and support of Dr. Dr. h.c. Monika Lehnhardt, Professor Dr. Witold Szyfter, as well as all other doctors and staff members of the ENT-department of the Karol Marcinkowski University Clinic!  
Our big thank you goes out to all of them!