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Brussels hospital now offers epilepsy patients minimally invasive therapy



Brussels University Hospital. © tbt.com

Brussels University Hospital, HUB, is now treating patients suffering from refractory epilepsy with a minimally invasive therapy.

On Friday, the hospital's neurosurgery team performed the first operation using Laser Interstitial Thermal Therapy (LITT), the institution announced in a press release on Monday.

LITT is a minimally invasive surgical technique that uses the heat released by laser light to selectively destroy the brain tissue responsible for epileptic seizures. Combined with Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) to visualise, in real time, the evolution of the treated brain areas, LITT offers unrivalled neurosurgical precision, making it possible to target the affected tissue while preserving healthy brain structures, the HUB team explained.

The therapy has "unprecedented efficacy, with 50 to 80% of patients free of seizures, even severe ones, in the medium term," according to the team. It considerably reduces the risk of post-operative complications, and the length of time patients spend in hospital.

In Belgium, 75,000 people suffer from epilepsy. Around 30% of them suffer from refractory epilepsy, which is the most difficult type to treat because it does not respond to any drug treatment.



LITT also represents a new therapeutic approach for brain cancer patients, who are often already suffering from the effects of chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

The Brussels University Hospital, the only one in Belgium to have this technology, was able to acquire it thanks to the support of the Erasmus Fund (Epilepsy) and the Jules Bordet Association (Oncology).