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[Home](#) -> [Research and Development](#) -> [Medtech Start-Ups: Small Robots Assist in Laparoscopic Surgery](#)

## Medtech Start-Ups: Small Robots Assist in Laparoscopic Surgery

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Source: EndoControl

In 2006, Clement Vidal and Patrick Henri founded the French company EndoControl to bring robots with a smaller footprint to the operating room to perform surgery on patients.

The first product they brought to market was the VIKY system based on robotic technology from the research lab at the University of Joseph Fourier in Grenoble, France. The robotic voice-activated surgical instrument holder for laparoscopic surgery positions an instrument, either a camera or retractor, exactly where the surgeon wants it and is able to keep the same positioning for extended periods of time.

In a collaborative project with the Paris-based University of Pierre and Marie Curie, the company also developed a hybrid laparoscopic instrument. Through a mini 5mm incision, it provides a deflectible tip to map a surgeon's hand

movements in the abdomen.

"The technology is based on co-manipulation principle. In this approach, the surgeon and the robot collaborate to operate on the patient simultaneously," explained CEO Clement Vidal who recently received an award in the 'World Innovation Challenge' for his work from French president François Hollande. "In existing robotic systems, the robot is physically in between the surgeon and the patient and thus prevents the surgeon from intervening directly on the patient in case of an emergency. EndoControl robotic systems bring the benefits of existing robotic systems while keeping the surgeon in a sterile environment."

According to WinterGreen Research, the global market in surgical robots is currently estimated at \$ 3.2b and is expected to reach \$ 20b by 2019. While in 2000 only 1,000 surgical operations around the world were carried out with robotic assistance, the number shot up to 450,000 in 2012.

According to Vidal, the company is currently working with research labs in Paris and Grenoble to speed up early stage development and explore ideas for new applications. EndoControl cooperates with TRUMPF medical system to sell the VIKY line in EMEA and is currently looking for partners to promote the products in the USA.

-- By [Thomas Klein](#), Managing Editor, EMDT

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