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Dr. Josiane Van der Elst

The Elegant Laser

In 2001, the Ghent University Hospital IVF lab was looking for the best instrument to use in its pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) program. Heleen Laverge, an embryologist with an engineering background, leads the program. She selected the ZILOS because there was a “need for an elegant biopsy system in the PGD program. I chose the ZILOS after careful comparison with competitors. I found the ZILOS to be the safest and most superior laser.”

Laverge’s PGD program enjoyed such success with the ZILOS that the lab began using the ZILOS for assisted hatching as well.

While the goals of PGD and assisted hatching are different, they share the need to open the zona. For this, Dr. Josiane Van der Elst, who manages the IVF lab, finds the ZILOS invaluable. Before the ZILOS, assisted hatching was performed mechanically and embryo biopsy accomplished with acid Tyrode. These time consuming tech-

niques required a great deal of training and skill; the ZILOS changed that. As Dr. Van der Elst points out, “the ZILOS fits everybody’s hands. The ZILOS is both time and cost effective in this respect.” She further states that because the ZILOS is so “operator friendly, the amount of time required for training and education is limited.”

The ZILOS has proven beneficial to both the operator and the embryo. Using a Class 1 laser, the ZILOS is safe for users, with no special training required. Plus, the ZILOS allows use of the lowest pulse settings to create a tunnel through the zona, minimizing trauma to the embryo. Van der Elst says that, “the zona effect that is reached is precise, consistent, and controllable... inadvertent use is virtually impossible.”

The doctor also values the flexibility and potential of the ZILOS because “while the ZILOS is employed in daily IVF lab activity using strict settings, it opens the possibility of research by presenting the facility of a research mode of laser intensity.”

Dr. Van der Elst feels that “Hamilton Thorne Biosciences keeps pace with the increased requirements for laboratory quality management necessary to obtain laboratory accreditation,” as demonstrated by continually updating ZILOS software. She also points out that, “Hamilton Thorne’s customer service keeps in touch with the buyer,” and in the event help is needed, “you find a listening ear.”



In closing Van der Elst said, “Quality serves and deserves quality. A busy highly experienced university referral IVF unit where treatment of extremely difficult, sometimes nearly hopeless cases, is an everyday challenge, needs to keep standards high and can only afford simply the best!”

Helen Laverge, Chief Technician

[Our thanks to Frank Raaijmakers of Orange Medical for recommending Dr. Van der Elst for the Customer Profile. If you would like us to profile one of your customers, please email Paula Hodgkins at phodgkins@hamiltonthorne.com. Please include information on the type of system installed, the focus of the facility, and how we may contact them.]