

**crp** Conference of Rectors and Presidents  
of European Universities of Technology

# New trends in medical robotics

**Bogdan GHERMAN, PhD**

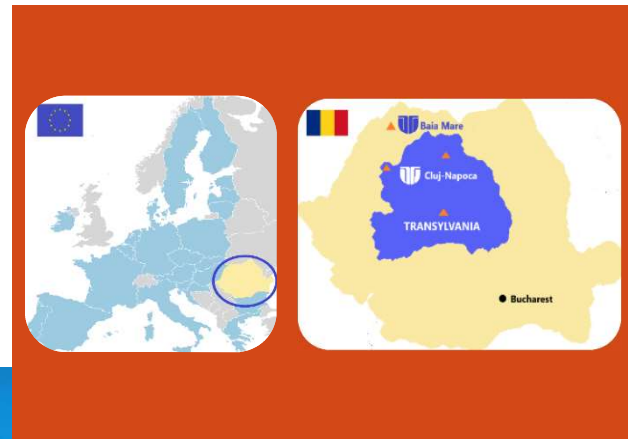
Technical University of Cluj-Napoca  
Research Center for Robots Simulation and Testing  
Memorandumului 28, RO-400114 Cluj-Napoca, ROMANIA  
E-Mail: doina.pisla@mep.utcluj.ro

**21.09. 2024**

# CLUJ-NAPOCA

(Kolozsvar, Klausenburg)

- 500.000 inhabitants in the metropolitan area
- 6 public universities with a total of 80.000 students
- Romania's leading hub of technology & innovations
- Significant city's workforce employed in IT





## STATE UNIVERSITIES IN CLUJ-NAPOCA

*Babes Bolyai* University

★ **THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA**

*Iuliu Hațieganu* University of **Medicine and Pharmacy**

University of **Agriculture Science and Veterinary Medicine**

*Gheorghe Dima* Academy of **Music**

*Ion Andreescu* Academy of **Visual Arts**

## TUCN'S STRENGTHS

### Regional dimension

*TUCN is recognized as a highly qualified human resource provider for the Northwest region of Romania through its 2 main campuses and 4 subsidiaries, providing multiple links within the regional innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem for a connected social and inclusive HE system.*

### Innovation and research

*TUCN is on the third position in terms of funds attracted through the Horizon 2020 and Europe programs, among the 48 state universities from Romania.*

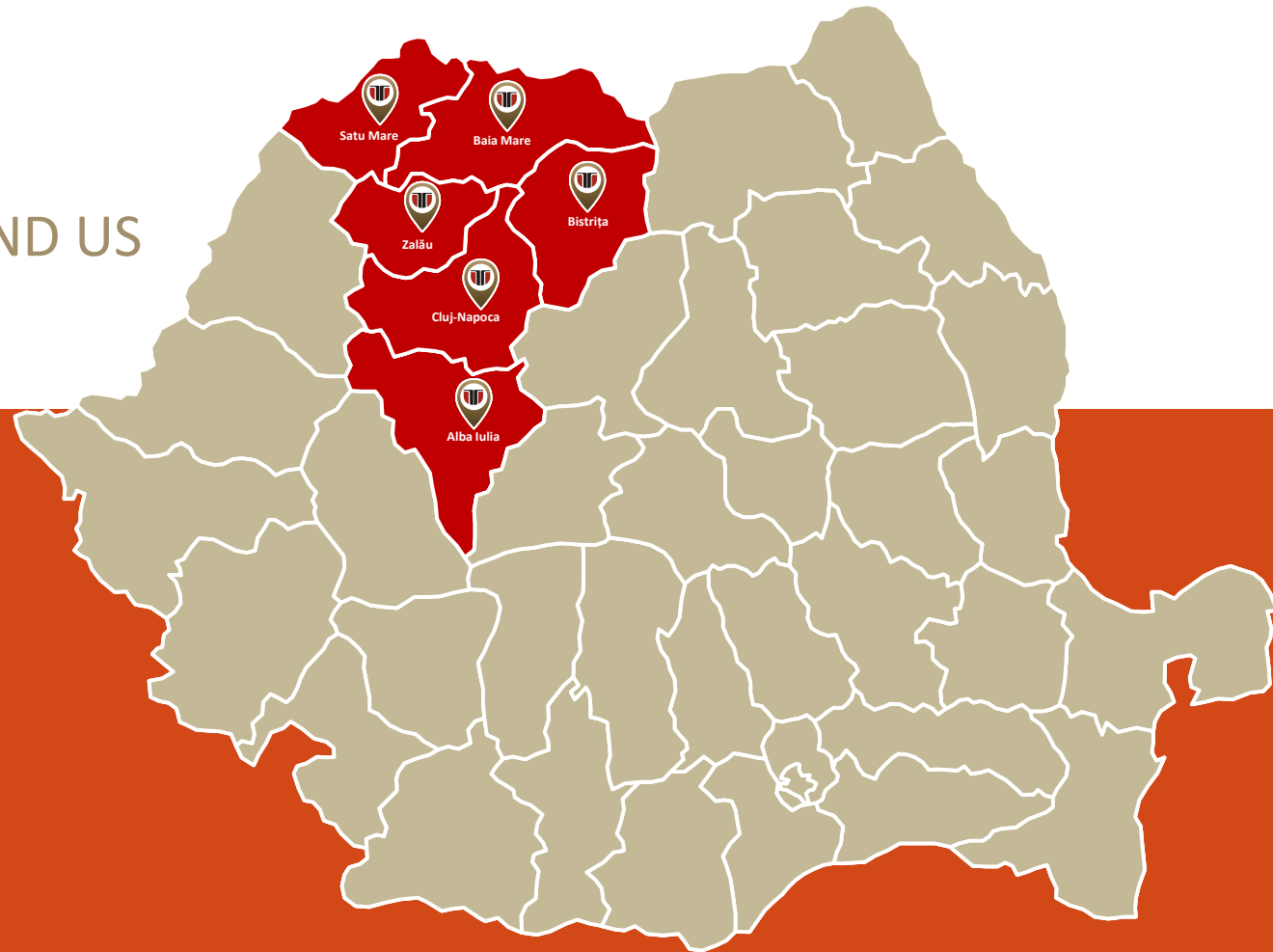
### Trust and reliability

*In 2023 the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, awarded the institution the "Highest Degree of Trust in HE". In 2019 TUCN received the status of international university of excellence (4 stars), following the external audit conducted by QS Stars Rating System (UK).*

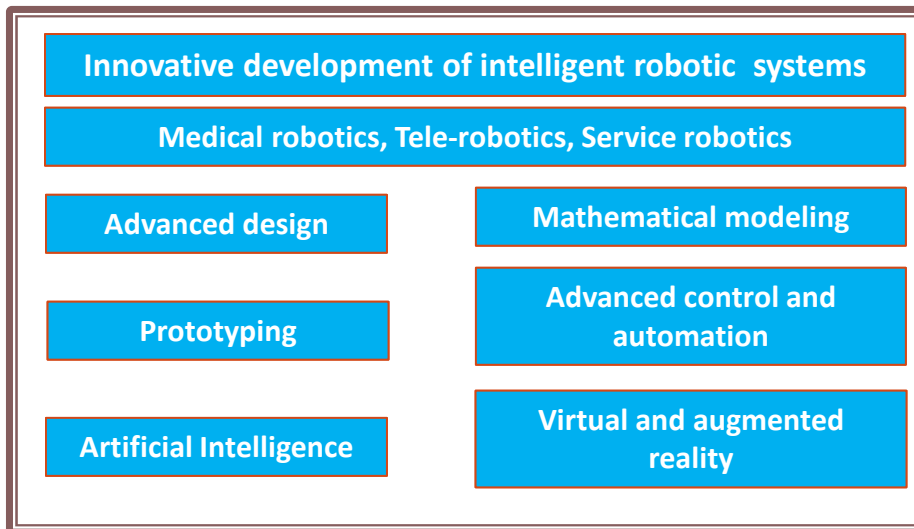




WHERE  
YOU CAN FIND US



## Research Center for Industrial Robots Simulation and Testing - CESTER



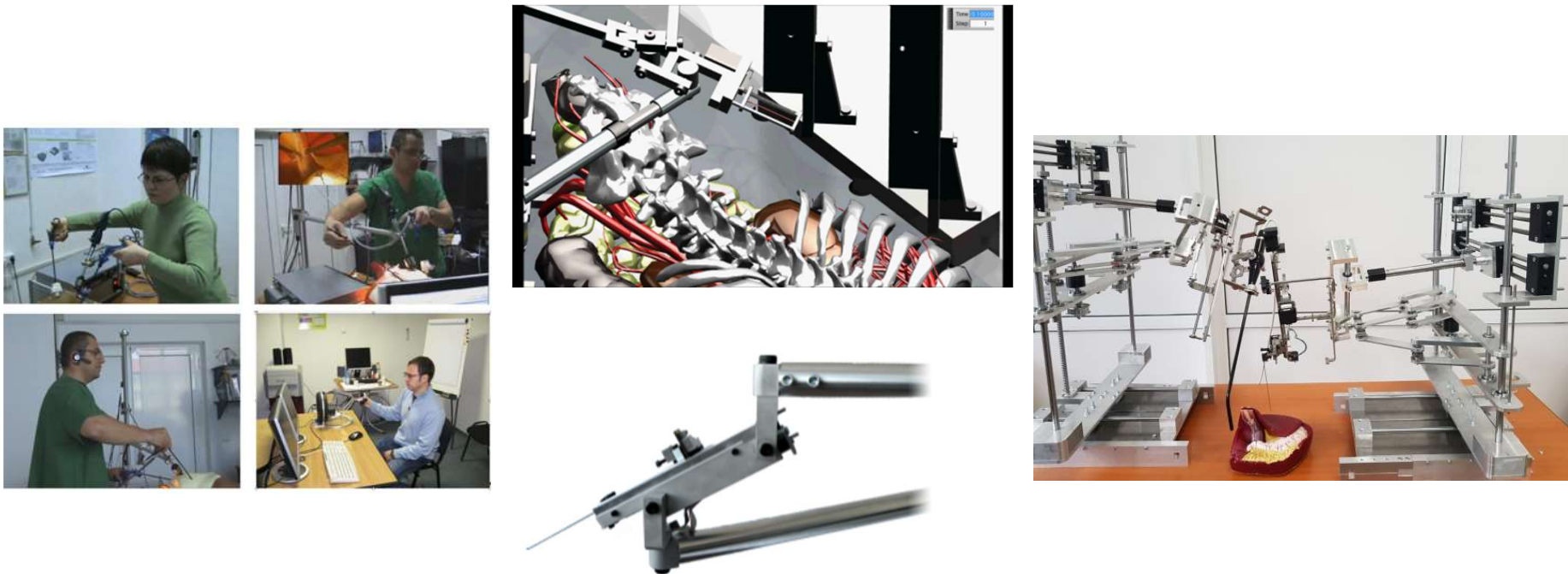
Innovate  
Experiment  
Progress  
Success



**Medical Collaborators:**

- ✓ Surgery
- ✓ Oncology
- ✓ Urology
- ✓ Medical rehabilitation

## Applications in Medical Robotics - Achievements



- ✓ **15 Patents** and **over 20** major national and international **Research Projects** in the medical robotics field.



## Overview of Medical Robotics

Consistent with the Multi-Annual Roadmap, there are three main subdomains that can be approached in Medical Robotics:

- **Rehabilitation robotics** - robotics for rehabilitation and prosthetics, whereas the increased life expectancy and the growing number of elderly persons make it a highly potential domain.
- **Clinical Robotics** - robots for surgery, diagnosis, and treatment robotics, where a common characteristic refers to the minimal invasiveness of the procedure.
- **Assistive robotics** - specialist support and assistive robots whereas the most relevant challenges refer to systems for carer support, patient manipulation (lifting and displacing), and biomedical and laboratory robots for medical investigation.

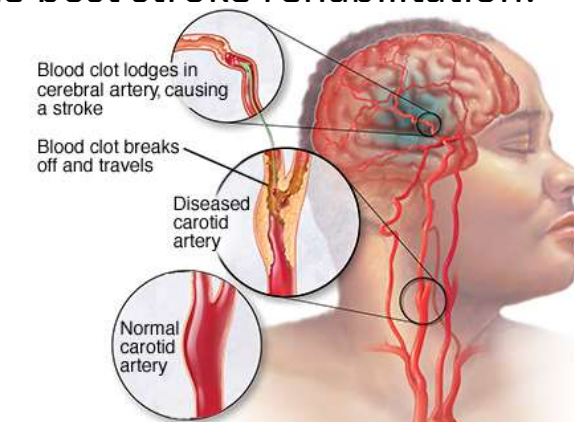


# CESTER Achievements in Rehabilitation Robotics



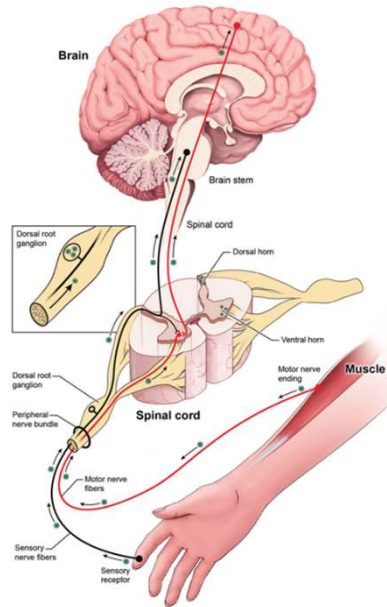
## Robotic rehabilitation: Why and How?

- **Stroke** is one of the major diseases which **targets especially the elderly population**
- Cerebro-vascular attacks (**stroke**) have a 75% survival rate, one year after the incident 1.1 million suffer a stroke each year in Europe alone
- **Stroke incidence will increase** with the increase of average life span of the population
- Most common stroke sufferers are people aged **65 and older**
- **80%** Stroke survivors suffer from paresis of the upper limb
- In less than 20 years the medical system will be **unable to supply sufficient medical personnel** to attend stroke patients;
- There are very **few devices** specialized in the acute post stroke rehabilitation.



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## The problem



Number of  
patients

**589.000** people are left with post-stroke disabilities every year in Europe, **75%** continue to experience upper extremity functional limitations even 15 years later.



Costs

Most institutions and the population at large cannot afford to access available robotic assisted rehabilitation solutions,



Number of  
caregivers

Shortage of caregivers (United Kingdom approx. **77.000**, France approx. **19.000**, Belgium approx. **7.500**),

## Proposed solution

**ROBOTIC SYSTEMS** which allow physical therapists to **develop patient-oriented rehabilitation programs** that can maximize the therapeutic effects aiming towards an **increased quality of life** in the framework of Activities of Daily Living (ADL).

# THE REHABILITATION ROBOTS FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

Adequate control

**Safety**

Modularity

Compactness and flexibility

Safe behavior  
in all configurations

Advanced control

**FAIL SAFE MEDICAL ROBOT**

Reconfigurable  
settings option

Monitored  
workspace



UNIUNEA EUROPEANĂ



Instrumente Structurale  
2014-2020



# INNOVATIVE APPROACHES REGARDING REHABILITATION AND ASSISTIVE ROBOTICS FOR HEALTHY AGEING



## Patents





UNIUNEA EUROPEANĂ



## Research results: 9 (nine) new robotic structures

No.	Name	Targeted limb	Targeted limb areas	Robot architecture	Development stage
1	ASPIRE	Upper limb	Shoulder and elbow	Spherical robot with parallel architecture	Prototype
2	PaRReEx	Upper limb	Elbow and wrist	Modular robot with parallel structure	Prototype
3	ReExRob	Upper limb	Elbow and wrist	Modular robot with serial structure	Concept Design
4	RAISE	Lower limb	Hip, knee and ankle	Modular robot with parallel structure	Prototype
5	RECOVER	Lower limb	Hip, knee and ankle	Modular robot with parallel structure	Prototype
6	CUBE	Lower limb	Knee and ankle	Wire-based modular robot	Prototype
7	DualEx	Upper limb	Elbow and wrist	Dual-arm exoskeleton	Mechanical Design
8	CableBot	Upper limb	Elbow	Wire-based modular robot	Concept Design
9	RAISE 2	Lower limb	Hip and knee	Spherical robot with parallel architecture	Concept Design



# From Theory to Practice

**Prototypes of Robotic systems for post-stroke rehabilitation**

AgeWell



## Upper limb rehabilitation robots

### ASPIRE

Parallel rehabilitation robot based on a spherical architecture:

- 3-DoF robotic system for:
  - ❖ Shoulder flexion/extension, abduction/adduction
  - ❖ Forearm pronation/supination
- Modular design
- Subject to clinical trials

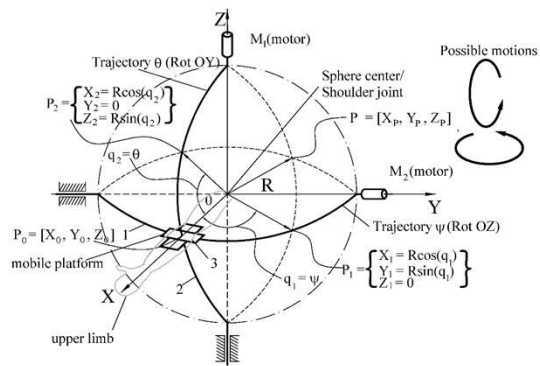
### ParReEx

Parallel rehabilitation robot with two uncoupled modules:

- Elbow module with 2-DoF for:
  - ❖ Elbow flexion/extension, abduction/adduction
- Wrist module with 2-DoF for:
  - ❖ Wrist flexion/extension, abduction/adduction
- Modular design
- Subject to clinical trials

# Development of ASPIRE robotic system

## Kinematic scheme and CAD simulations



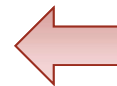
Final design



Experimental model



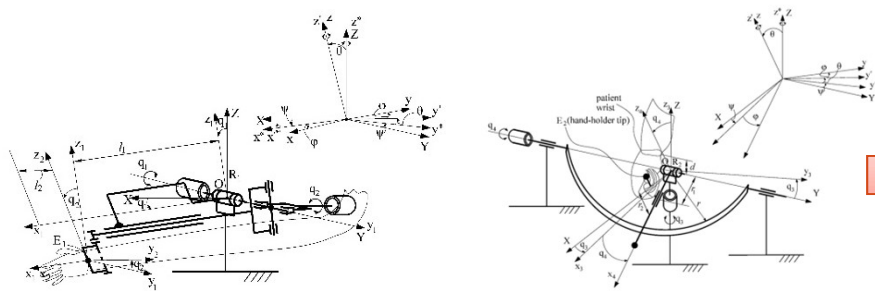
Clinical trials



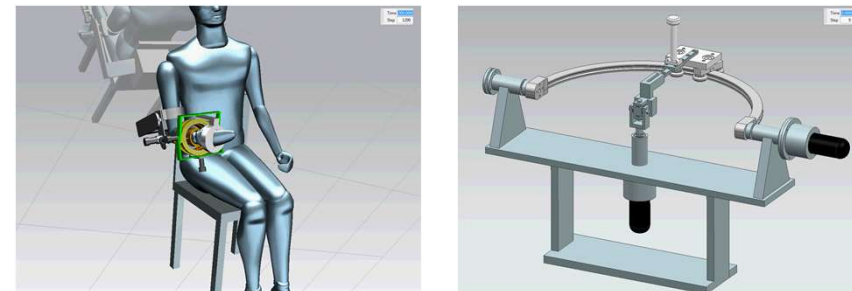


# Development of ParReEx wrist and ParReEx elbow

Kinematic schemes



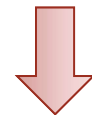
CAD models simulations



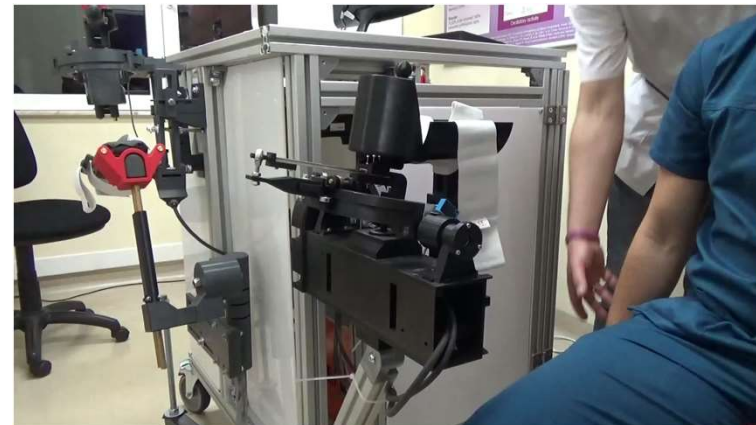
ParReEx Elbow



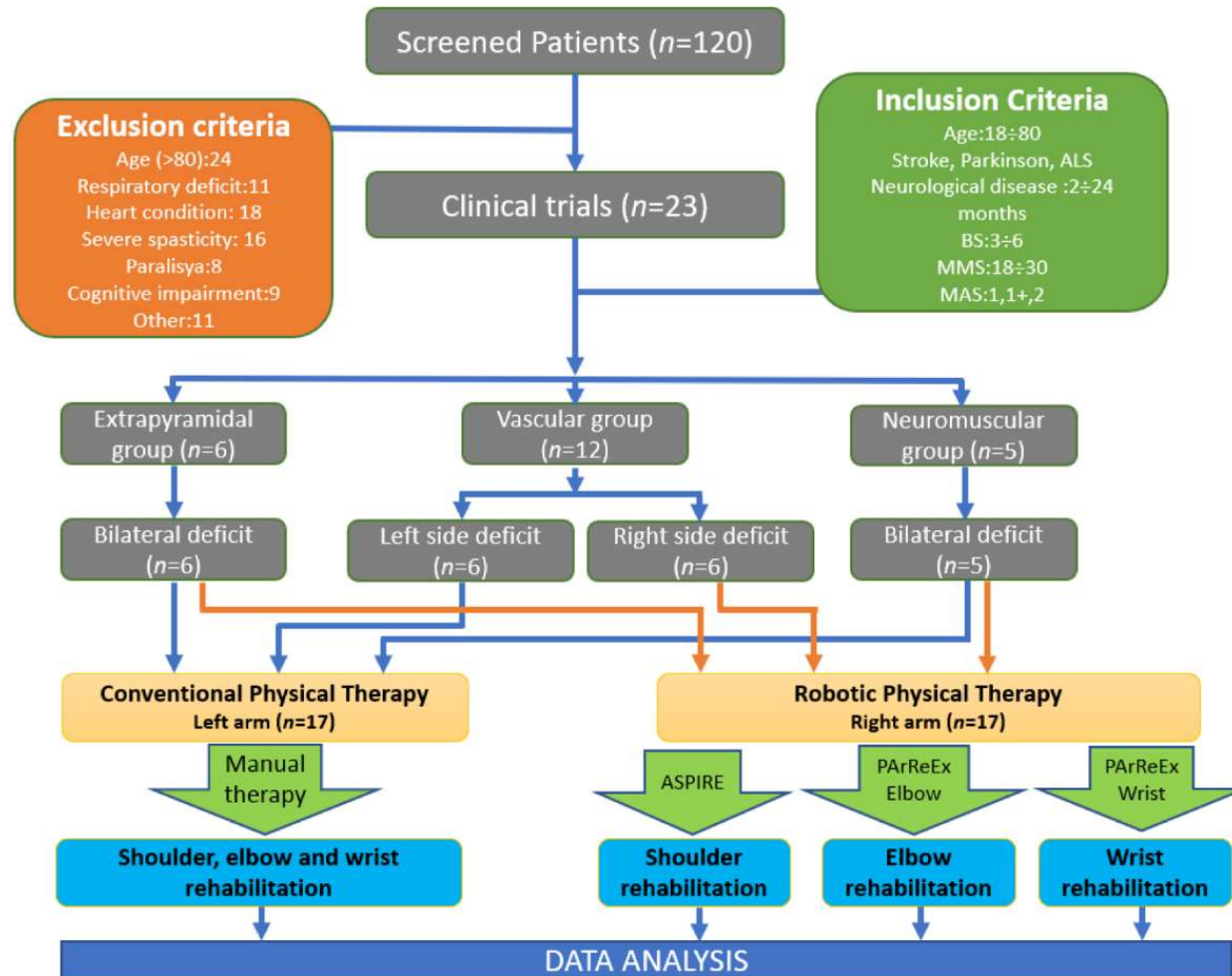
Clinical trials



ParReEx Wrist



# Clinical trials



## Clinically tested robotic system

24 patients  
feedback

50  
clinicians  
feedback

15 engineers  
feedback

Clinical  
trials



ASPIRE



ParReEx-  
wrist



ParReEx-  
elbow

# Clinical validation – proof of feasibility

24 patients

Clinical study



Article

## The Impact of Robotic Rehabilitation on the Motor System in Neurological Diseases. A Multimodal Neurophysiological Approach

Zoltán Zsigmond Major<sup>1,2</sup>, Calin Vaida<sup>3</sup>, Kinga Andrea Major<sup>4,\*</sup>, Paul Tucan<sup>3</sup>, Gábor Simori<sup>2</sup>, Alexandru Banica<sup>3</sup>, Emanuela Brusturean<sup>2</sup>, Alin Burz<sup>3</sup>, Raul Craciunas<sup>2</sup>, Ionut Ulinici<sup>3</sup>, Giuseppe Carbone<sup>3,5</sup>, Bogdan Gherman<sup>3</sup>, Iosif Birlescu<sup>3</sup> and Doina Pisla<sup>3,\*</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> Research Center for Advanced Medicine “MedFuture”, University of Medicine and Pharmacy “Iuliu Hatieganu” Cluj-Napoca, 40000 Cluj-Napoca, Romania; zoltan.major@eeg-emg.ro
  - <sup>2</sup> Neurology Department, Municipal Clinical Hospital Cluj-Napoca, 400139 Cluj-Napoca, Romania; simorigabor@gmail.com (G.S.); emabrusturean@yahoo.com (E.B.); raul\_rullz@yahoo.com (R.C.)
  - <sup>3</sup> Research Center for Industrial Robots Simulation and Testing, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, 400114 Cluj-Napoca, Romania; calin.vaida@mep.utcluj.ro (C.V.); paul.tucan@mep.utcluj.ro (P.T.); alexandru.banica@omt.utcluj.ro (A.B.); alin.burz@mep.utcluj.ro (A.B.); ionut.ulinici@omt.utcluj.ro (I.U.); giuseppe.carbone@unical.it (G.C.); bogdan.gherman@mep.utcluj.ro (B.G.); iosif.birlescu@mep.utcluj.ro (I.B.)
  - <sup>4</sup> Second ICU, Neurosurgery Department, Cluj County Emergency Clinical Hospital, Strada Clinicilor 3–5, 400000 Cluj-Napoca, Romania
  - <sup>5</sup> DIMEG, University of Calabria, Via Pietro Bucci, 87036 Arcavacata, Italy
- \* Correspondence: majorkinga@yahoo.com (K.A.M.); doina.pisla@mep.utcluj.ro (D.P.)

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**Abstract:** Motor disability is a key feature of many neurological diseases, influencing the social roles of affected patients and their ability to perform daily life activities. Current rehabilitation capacities are overwhelmed by the age-related increase of motor dysfunctions seen, for example, in stroke, extrapyramidal or neuromuscular diseases. As the patient to rehabilitation personnel ratio increases, robotic solutions might establish the possibility to rapidly satisfy the increasing demand for rehabilitation. This paper presents an inaugural exploratory study which investigates the interchangeability of a novel experimental robotic rehabilitation device system with classical physical therapy, using a multimodal neurophysiological assessment of the motor system—quantitative electroencephalogram (EEG), motor conduction times and turn/amplitude analysis. Preliminary results show no significant difference between the two methods; however, a significant effect of the therapy was found on different pathologies (beneficial for vascular and extrapyramidal, or limited, and only on preventing reduction of joint movements in neuromuscular).

**Keywords:** robotic rehabilitation; physical therapy; stroke; Parkinson’s; ALS; qEEG; motor conduction time; turn-amplitude analysis

## Agewell clinical trials – patient testimonials

### ***Stroke recovering patient statement after receiving robotic rehabilitation with the ASPIRE system:***

“Today I was asked to fill in a form stating my opinion regarding the robotic system that I’ve been exercising with. But I am a simple man, and I don’t know much about technology so it’s hard for me to answer all those questions. But I can tell you this: I had a major stroke five months ago which left me with severe hemiparesis and since then I was unable to do many things around the house. But most of all I suffered as I was not even able to hold a pen in my hand and write down my name. After three days spent here with you, I succeeded in signing a form to request to vote for the elections from inside the hospital. So, for me this is the greatest achievement after I had my stroke and I thank you for this.”

(Anonymous patient)



Rehabilitation exercise performed on male patient (back view capturing the patient position with his arm stretched).

## Agewell clinical trials – patient testimonials

### ***Stroke recovering patient statement after receiving robotic rehabilitation with the ParReEx system:***

“When I received the call from the doctors asking me whether I would like to test a new device that would help me in the rehabilitation process I was kind of happy and considered myself very lucky. Going inside the treatment room and seeing the device, my first question to the people in there was: is this from Germany? I was happy to find out that it was made in our city, in Cluj, because it was functioning so well that it could have been also from Germany. I’m glad that people here are thinking about us and are working to find ways to help us get better, so I told both doctors and engineers: I hope I’ll see more of these soon also in other hospitals.”



Patient during rehabilitation with ParReEx elbow (top view capturing the patients' lower limb mounted using the anchors).

(Anonymous patient)



## Lower limb rehabilitation robots

### RECOVER

Parallel rehabilitation robot with two coupled modules for gait rehabilitation.

- 3-DoF parallel module for:
  - ❖ **Hip** flexion/extension
  - ❖ **Knee** flexion/extension
- 2-DoF parallel spherical module for:
  - ❖ **Ankle** flexion/extension, inversion/eversion
- Modular design
- Under development

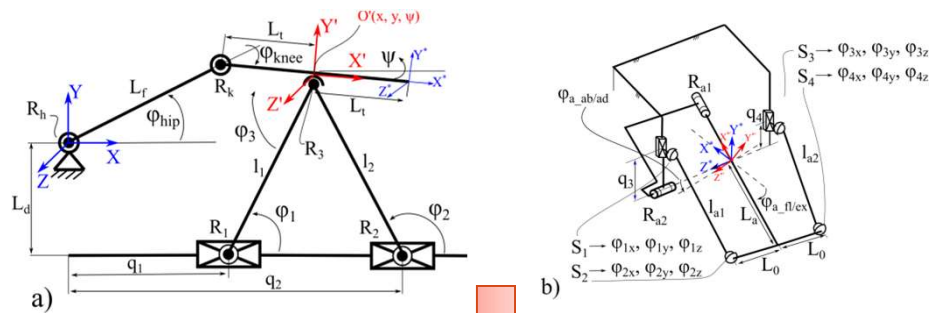
### RAISE

Parallel rehabilitation robot with two coupled modules for lower limb rehabilitation.

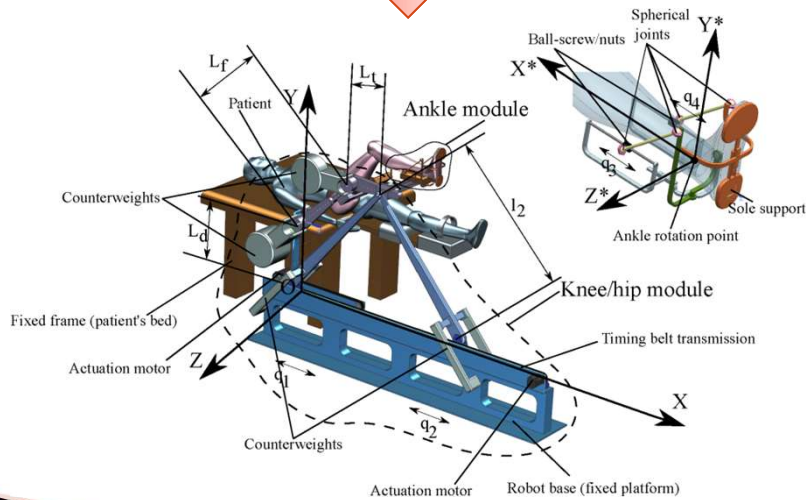
- 3-DoF parallel module for:
  - ❖ **Hip** flexion/extension, abduction/adduction
  - ❖ **Knee** flexion/extension
- 2-DoF serial spherical module for:
  - ❖ **Ankle** flexion/extension, inversion/eversion
- Modular design
- Ensures patient safety and ergonomics
- Tested in the laboratory

# Development of RECOVER robotic system for lower limb rehabilitation

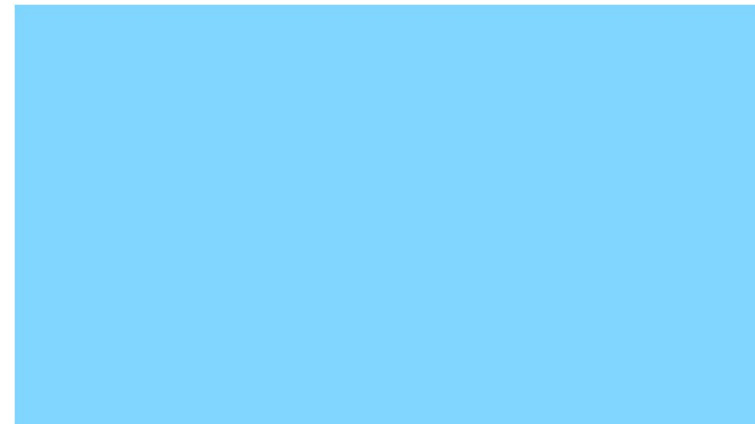
Kinematic scheme



CAD design



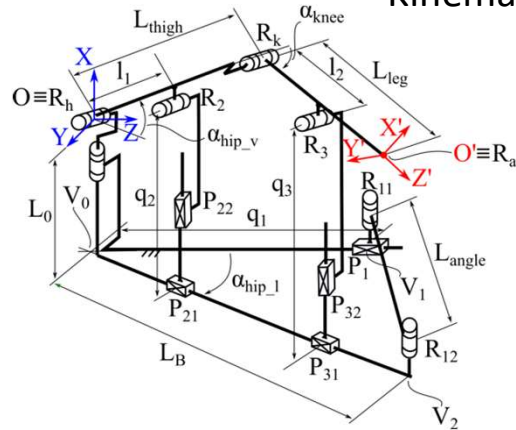
Prototype development



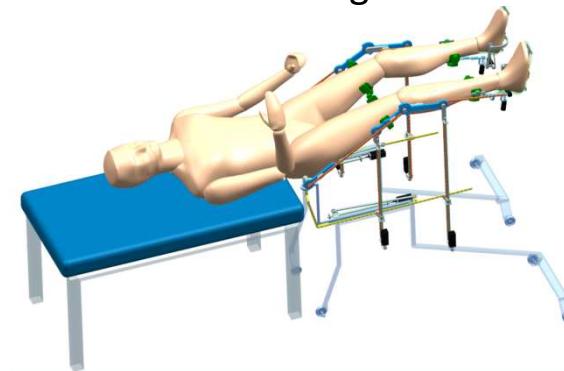


# Development of RAISE lower limb rehabilitation system

Kinematic scheme



CAD Design



Experimental testing



# Apollo European project

Intelligent telerobotic systems for the personalised treatment of neuromotor deficit to increase the patients quality of life – APOLLO



SITLINE  
TECHNOLOGY



UNIVERSITATEA TEHNICĂ  
DIN CLUJ-NAPOCA

(Project funded through Competitiveness Operational Programme 2014-2020, with the support of the European Union, under the **Call Innovative Technological Projects - 2022**)

## The first technologic transfer of a medical robot in Romania



**Main objective:** APOLLO aims to achieve the **technological transfer** of a robotic system for medical rehabilitation in the framework of a private-public partnership, to develop **an innovative technological product** – as an **intelligent robotic system** – that will perform optimal treatment programs for patients with different neuromotor deficiencies using on-line on-site personalized programs under the supervision of medical experts.

## Recent achievements in Surgical Robotics



- **IMPROVE project - High accuracy innovative approach for the robotic assisted intraoperative treatment of hepatic tumors based on imagistic-molecular diagnosis**, National Complex Project for Research, Development and Innovation, financed by the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI), Project code: PN-III-P1-1.2-PCCDI2017-0221, Contract no: 59/1 March 2018, Project duration: 2018-2021 (Manager -Doina Pislă)



- **Heal4Liv project - Innovative robotic system for cancer treatment**, Financed by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT-Health) through InnoStars, 2020 (Manager – Bogdan Gherman)



- **OnTarget project - Innovative robotic guided instruments for the treatment of malignant tumors**, Experimental demonstration project (PED) financed by the Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation(UEFISCDI), Project code: PN-III-P2-2.1-PED2019-4375, 2020-2022 (Manager - Calin Vaida)



- **CHALLENGE project - New frontiers in robotic assisted single port surgery: a novel robotic system with dexterous instruments**, National Exploratory Project, financed by the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI), Project code: PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-0572-PCE-171, Contract no: 171/2021, Project duration: 2021-2023 (Manager - Doina Pislă)

## Recent achievements in Surgical Robotics



## Our Vision

Development of innovative intelligent robotic systems in the major domain:

### CANCER TREATMENT

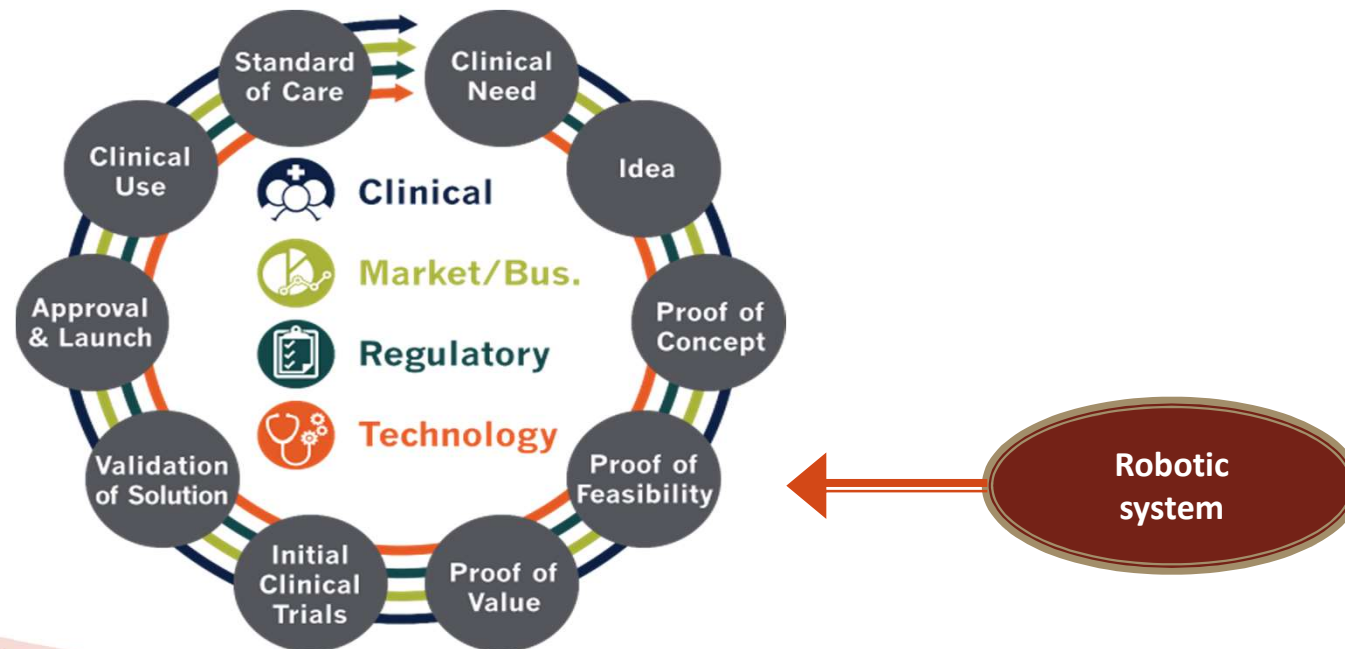
To provide **efficient treatments** in a **human centered design** embedding the needs of the patients to achieve the **increase of the quality of life** in an economically sustainable environment.

DEVELOPMENT

## What was the proposed solution?

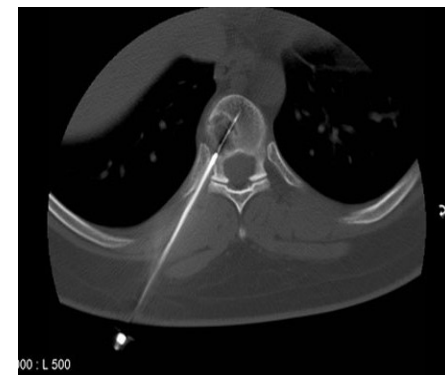
Development of an innovative, modular robotic system for HepatoCellular Carcinoma (HCC) treatment capable of:

- Percutaneous HDR brachytherapy;
- Radiofrequency ablation;
- Targeted intratumoral chemotherapy;



## What is the problem that was addressed?

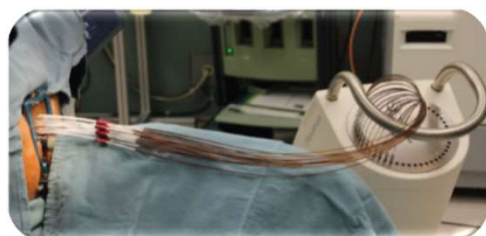
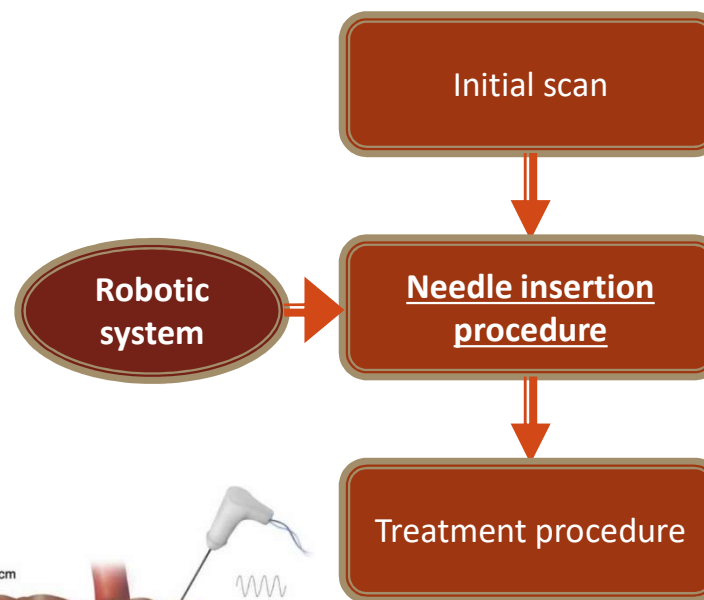
- Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) is the most common type of liver cancer, accounting for 80-90% of liver cancer cases, and being one of the top cancer-related causes of death (5<sup>th</sup>-2012, 4<sup>th</sup>-2016 3<sup>rd</sup>-2019).
- Robotic System for Liver Cancer Therapy is Cost-Effective & Fits Current Care Continuum.
- There is a technological limitation in the application of interventional (intratumoral) treatment in HCC.
- The manual insertion of the needles delivering the treatment lacks the required accuracy (in BT 1mm accuracy is required while manual accuracy cannot go below 3.7 mm).
- Accurate real-time imaging techniques (CT, MRI) impose the use of specialized automated devices for needle positioning and insertion.
- The only commercially available solution (XACT Robotics) is only able to insert small needles, which limits its applicability in the case of deeply located tumors.



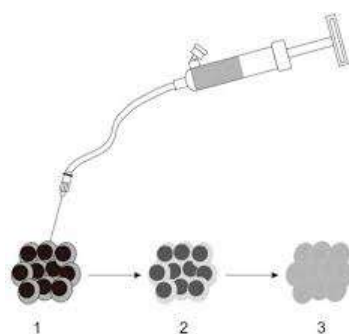
Brachytherapy needle position

# Treatment procedure

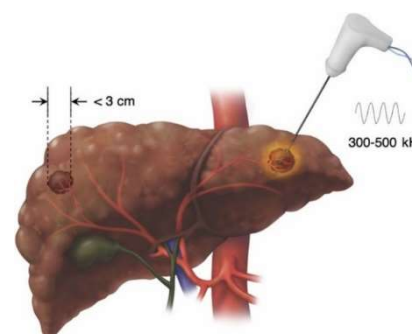
The proposed solution is designed for the needle insertion/retraction stages in the oncologic procedures. The therapeutic agents (HDR brachytherapy, radiofrequency ablation or intratumoral chemotherapy) are then delivered through the needles using specialized medical devices.



HDR brachytherapy



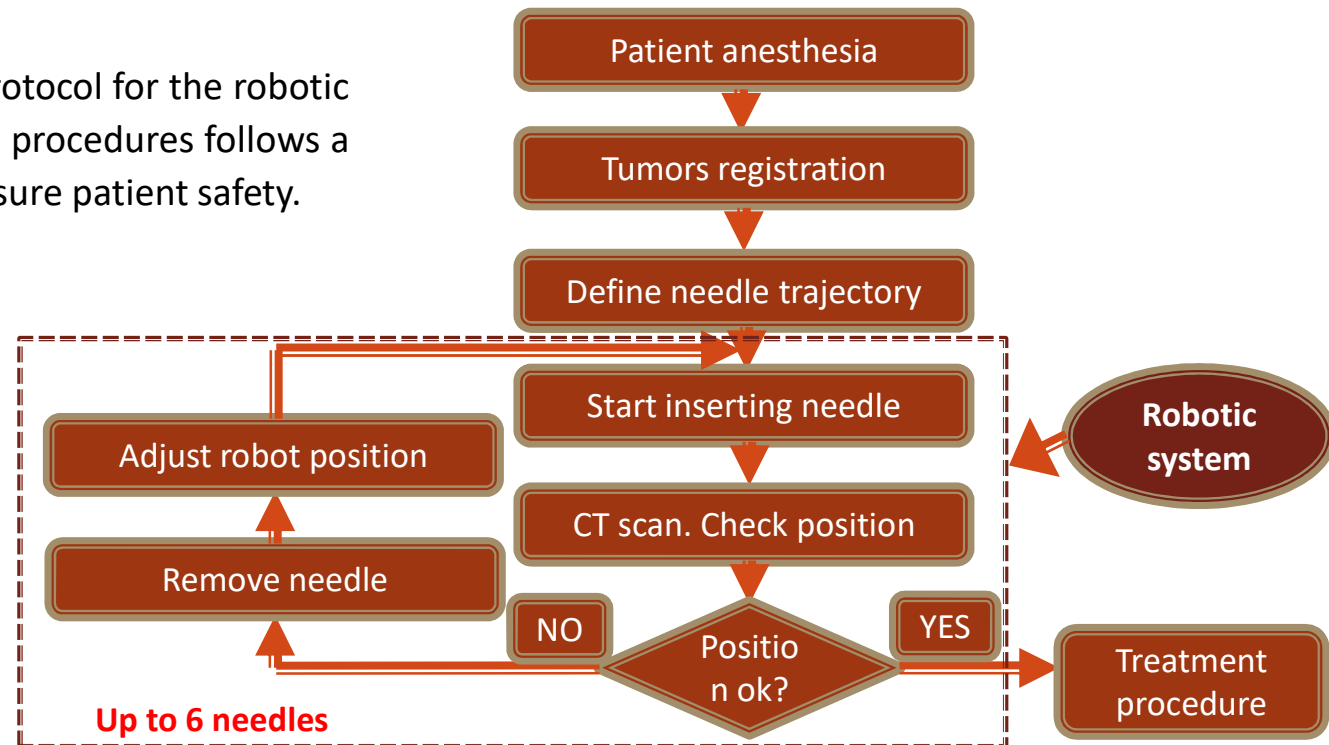
Intratumoral chemotherapy



Radiofrequency ablation

## Needle insertion procedure

The medical approved protocol for the robotic assisted needle insertion procedures follows a stepwise approach to ensure patient safety.





## Main achievements

- ✓ More than 40 scientific papers were published in international journals or international conference proceedings
- ✓ 8 patent applications
- ✓ Multiple distinctions and awards within different international innovation fairs
- ✓ Multiple plenary lectures at international conferences
- ✓ 1 habilitation thesis

For more information about the list of publications please visit our project websites:

[https://cester.utcluj.ro/improve/en/home\\_en.html](https://cester.utcluj.ro/improve/en/home_en.html)

[https://cester.utcluj.ro/heal4liv/en/home\\_en.html](https://cester.utcluj.ro/heal4liv/en/home_en.html)

[https://cester.utcluj.ro/OnTarget/en/home\\_en.html](https://cester.utcluj.ro/OnTarget/en/home_en.html)



# From Theory to Practice

## Prototypes of Robotic systems for liver cancer treatment

# IMPROVE project

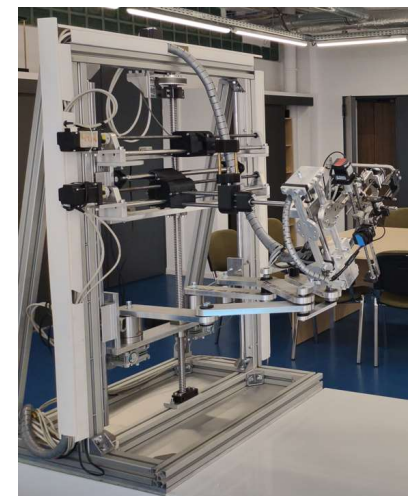
## Parallel robotic system for intraoperative treatment of hepatic tumors - PROHEP-LCT (2020)



US guiding module

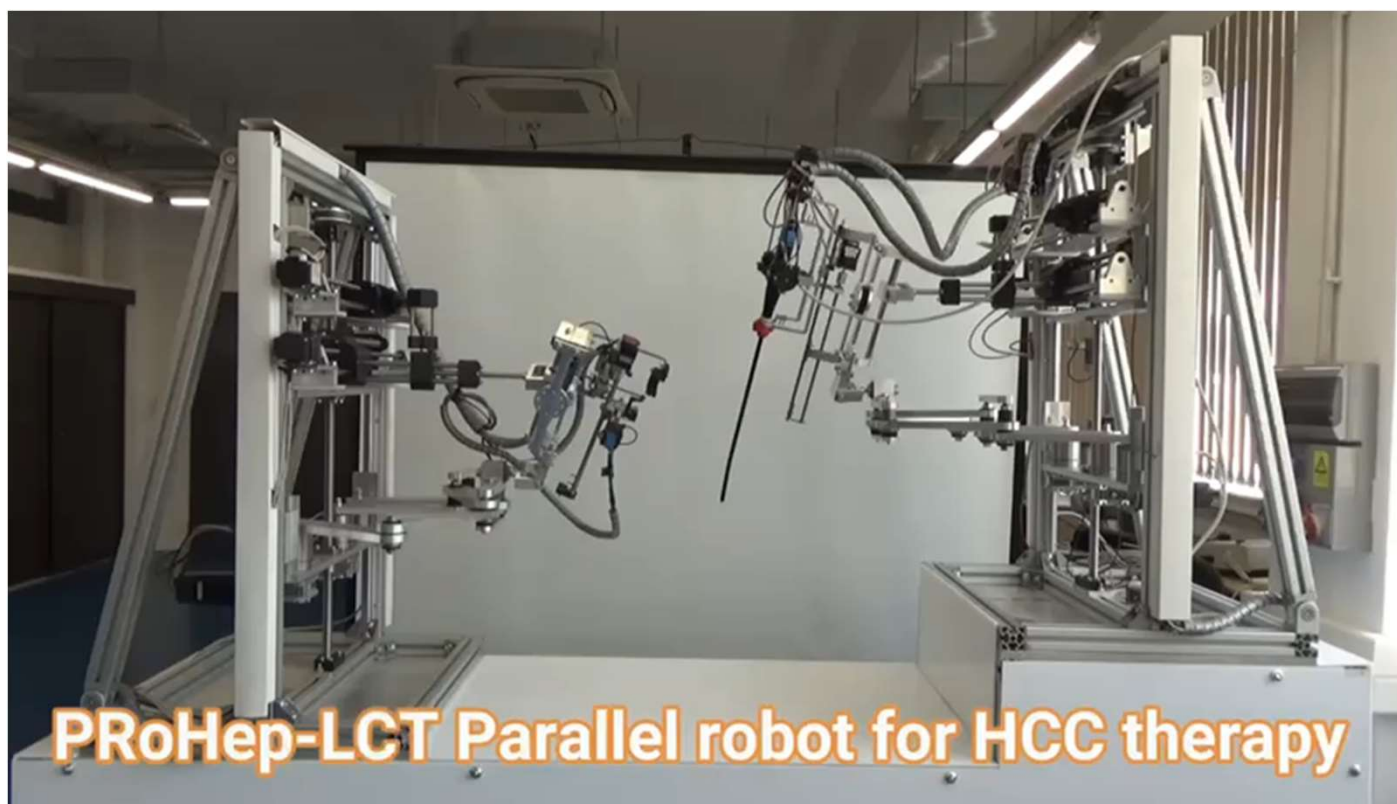


PROHEP-LCT Robotic system



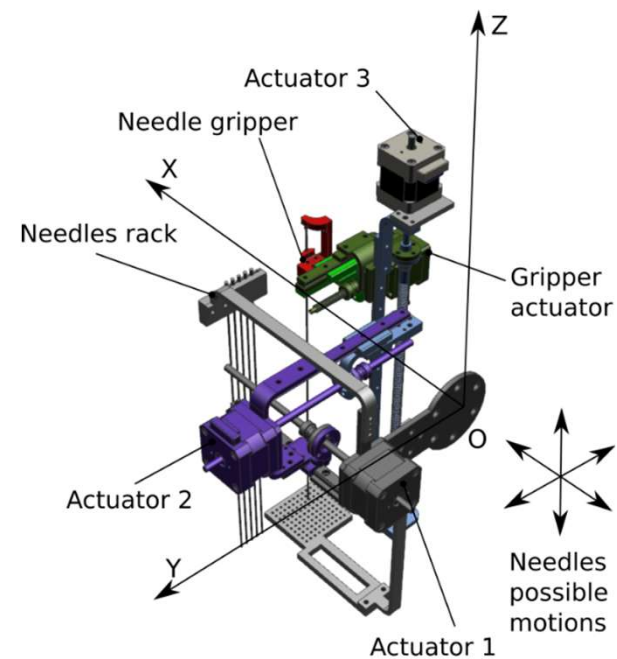
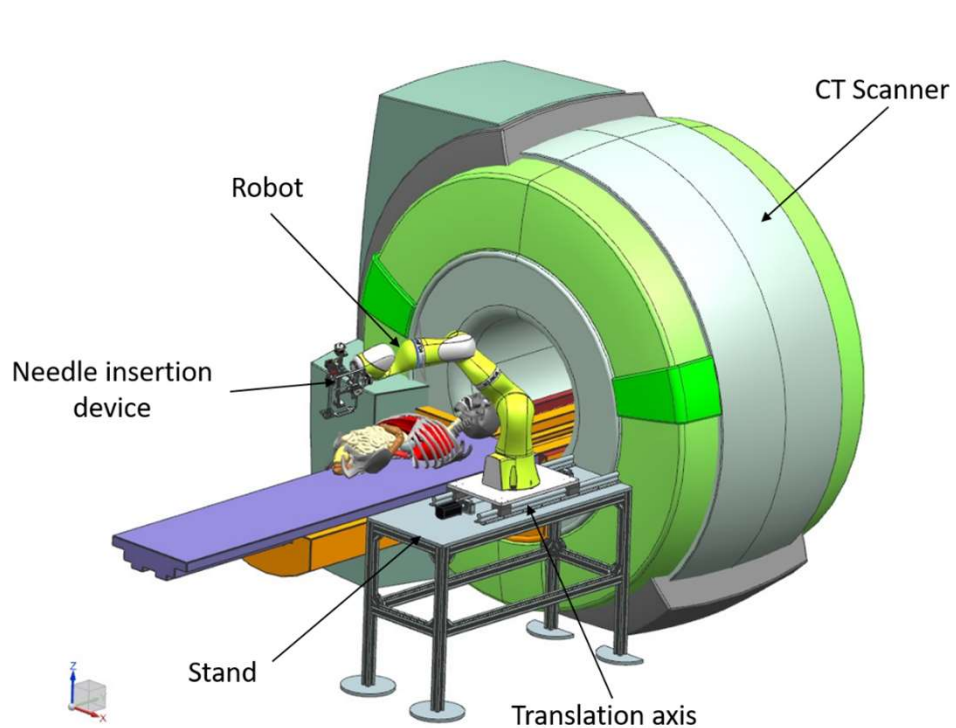
Needle guiding module

**IMPROVE project**  
**Parallel robotic system for intraoperative**  
**treatment of hepatic tumors - PROHEP-LCT**



# HEAL4LIV project

## The robotic system under CT guiding

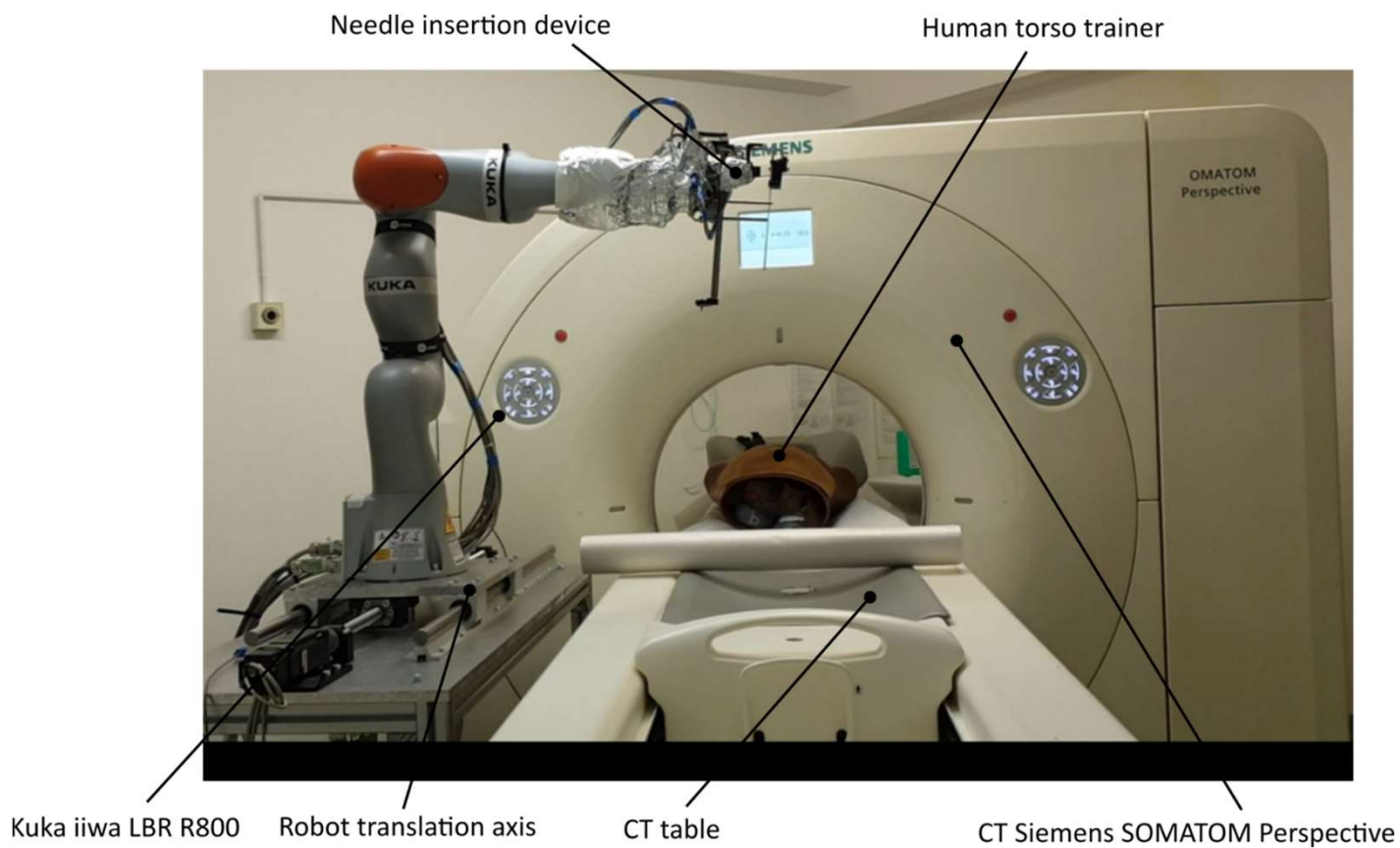


**Final CAD design of the automated medical instrument**

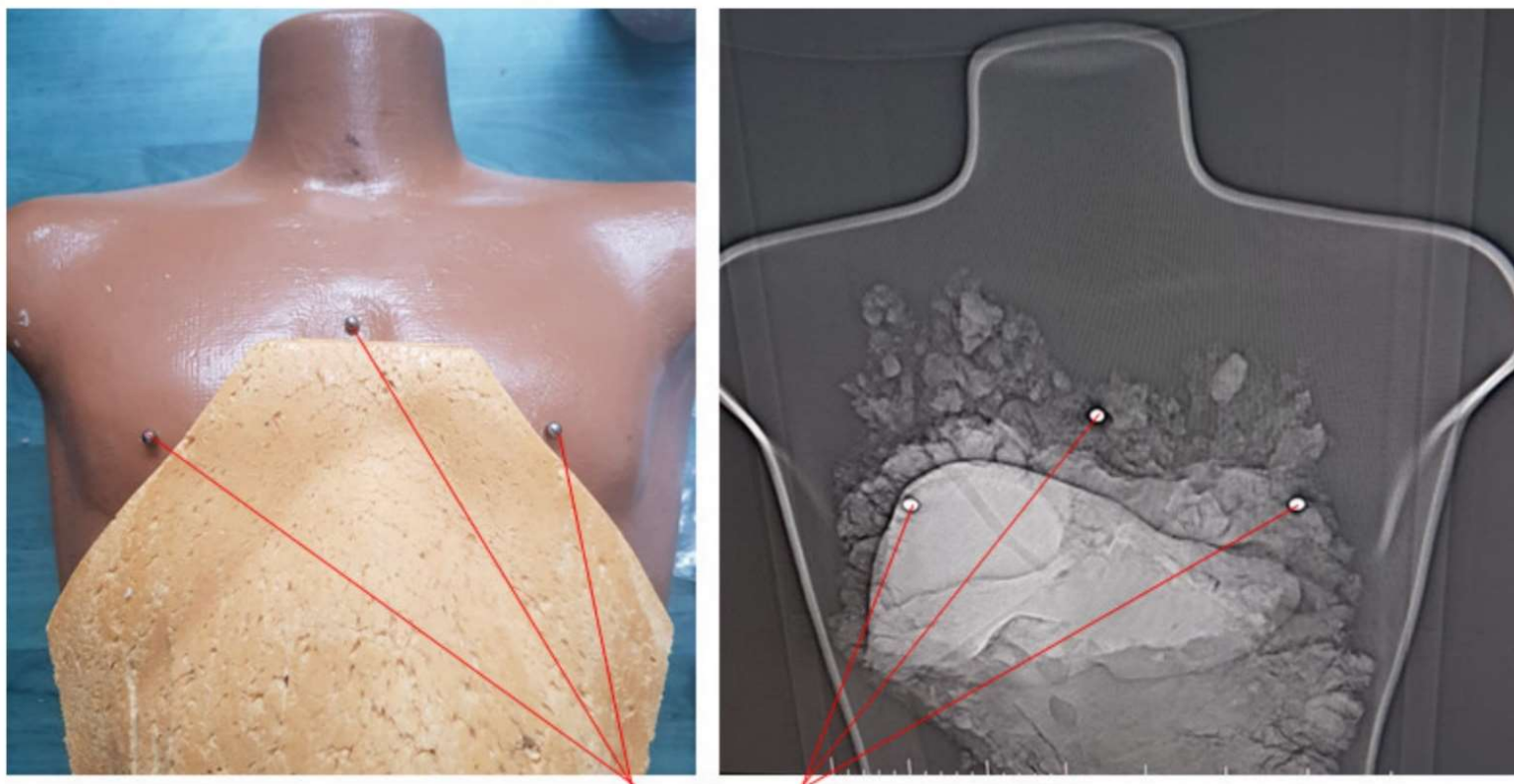
**Patent pending**

OSIM, A00806/28.11.2019

## HEAL4LIV robotic system under CT guiding (2021)



## HEAL4LIV robotic system – experimental setup



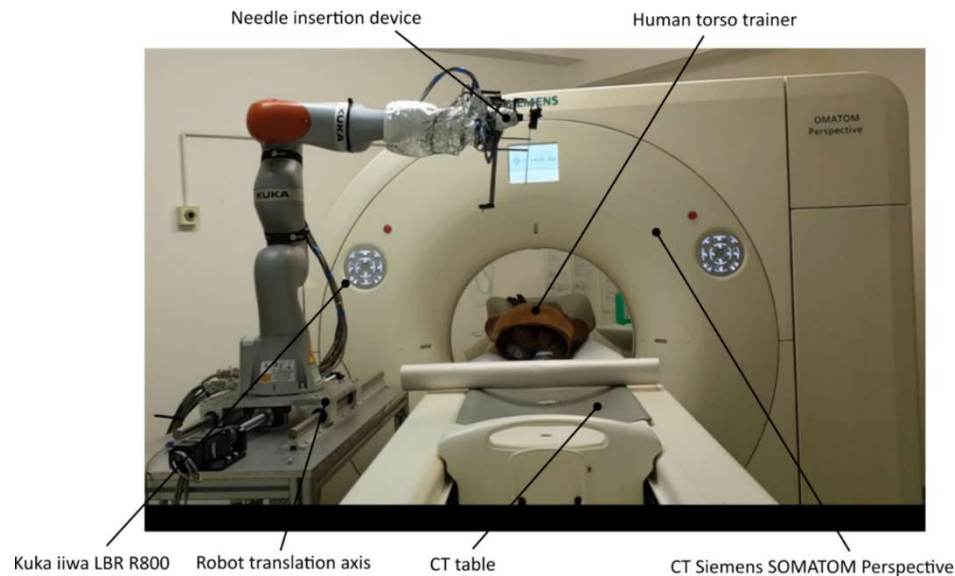
Set of markers highly visible within CT scans

## HEAL4LIV robotic system – experimental setup





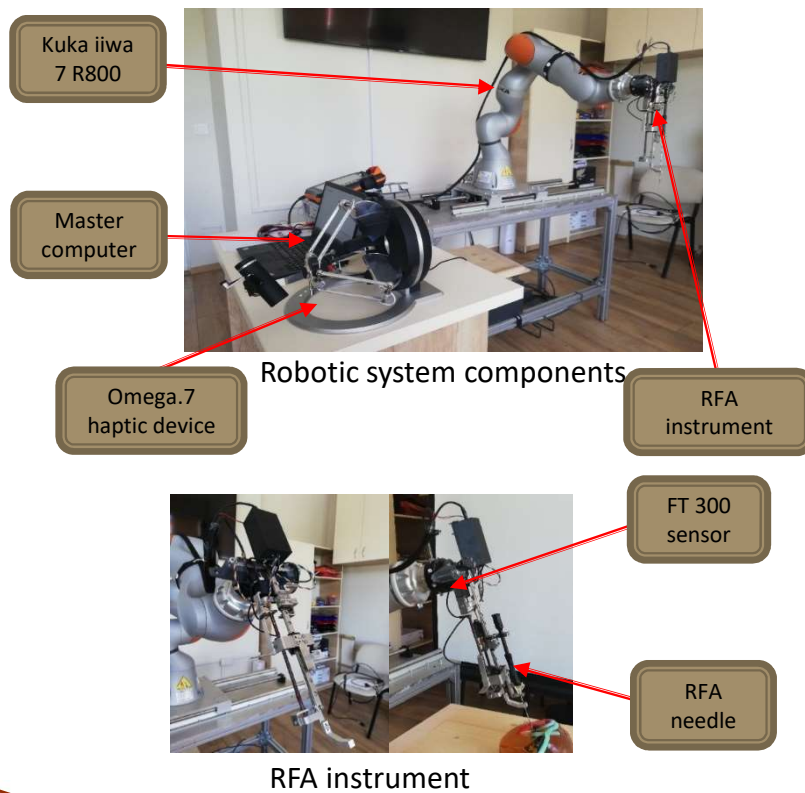
## HEAL4LIV robotic system testing in medical environment (2021)



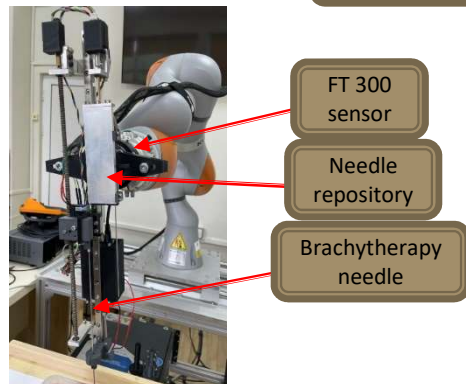
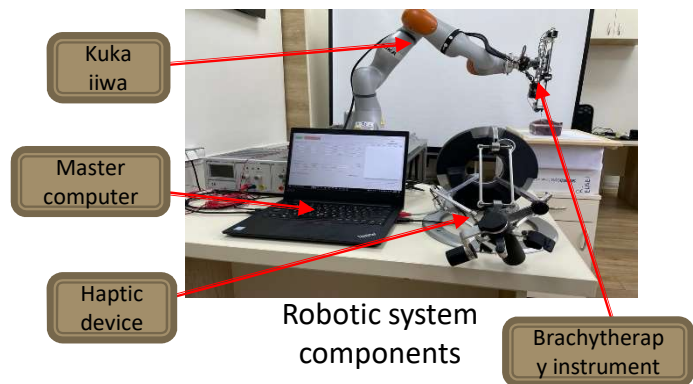
- The robot is positioned, so that the needle is placed at the insertion point with a predefined trajectory.
- After positioning the robotic system, the insertion tool selects the needle to be inserted.
- The needle is inserted along a linear path to a predetermined depth.
- After inserting the needle, a CT scan is performed for this, the linear axis of translation moves the Kuka robotic system so that the relative position between the Kuka robot and the CT remains constant.
- After confirming the position of the needle through the CT scan, release the therapeutic needle.

## OnTarget project

### Teleoperated robotic system for liver cancer treatment (RFA procedure - 2022)



## OnTarget project Teleoperated robotic system for liver cancer treatment (Brachytherapy procedure -2022)

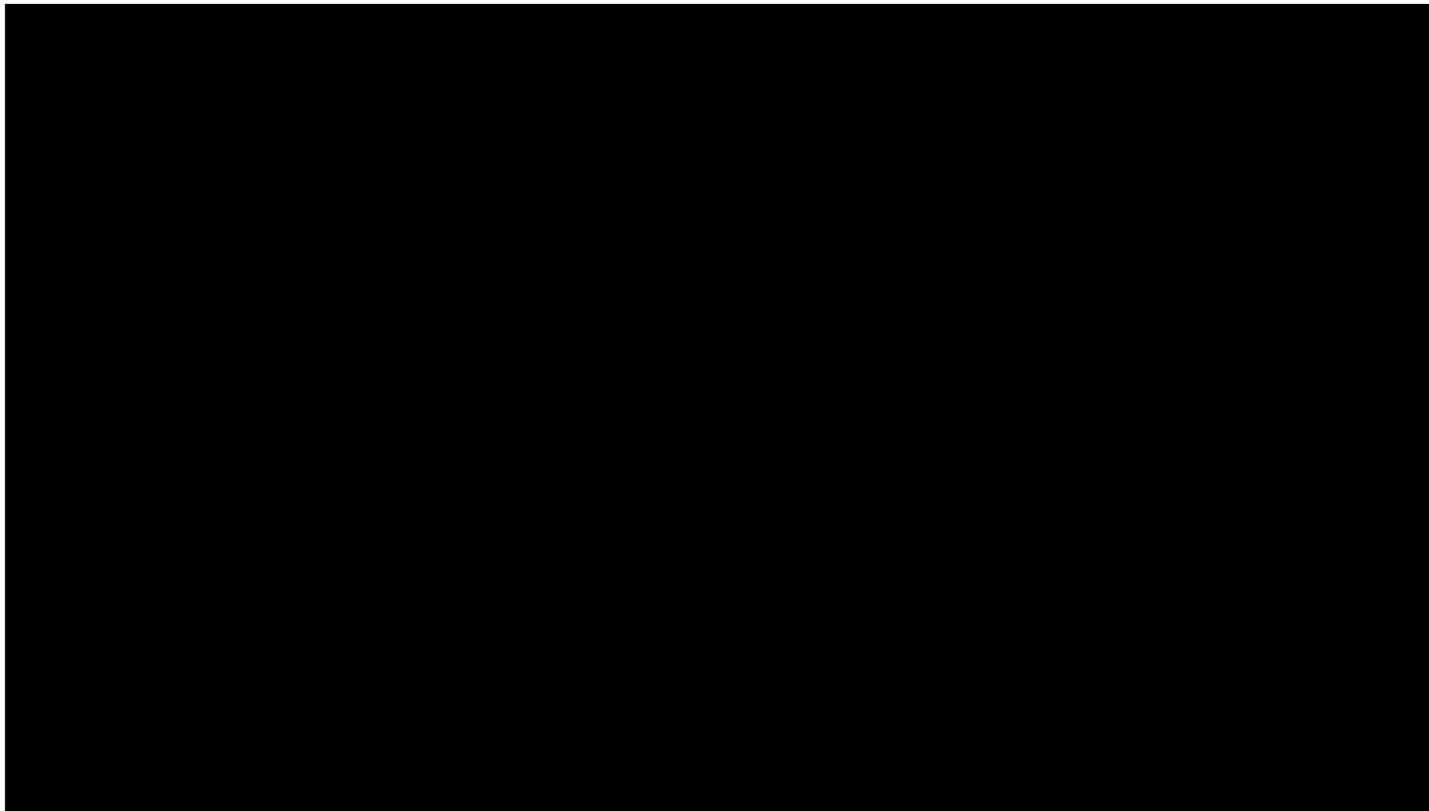


Brachytherapy instrument



# **OnTarget project**

## **Teleoperated robotic system used in minimally invasive surgery for liver cancer treatment**



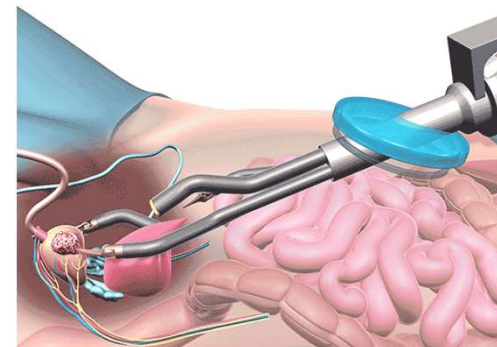
## CHALLENGE project

# Robotic System used in Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery



Some specific characteristics and advantages of SILS:  
Less tissue scarring; Shorter patient recovery time; Reduced bleeding; All instruments are inserted through a single port.

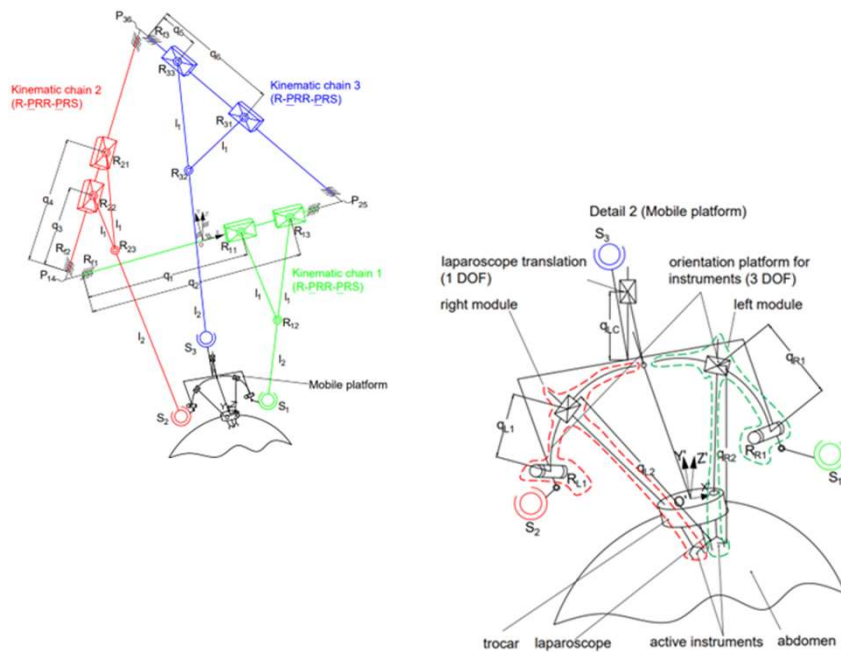
One of its reported drawbacks, namely the limited dexterity of the instruments (due to their proximity) is mitigated in the robotic assisted procedure.



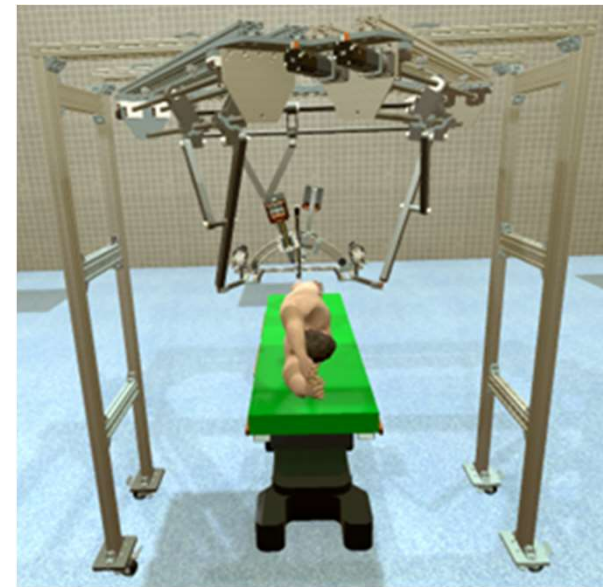
# CHALLENGE project

## Parallel robotic system for Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery

Kinematic scheme



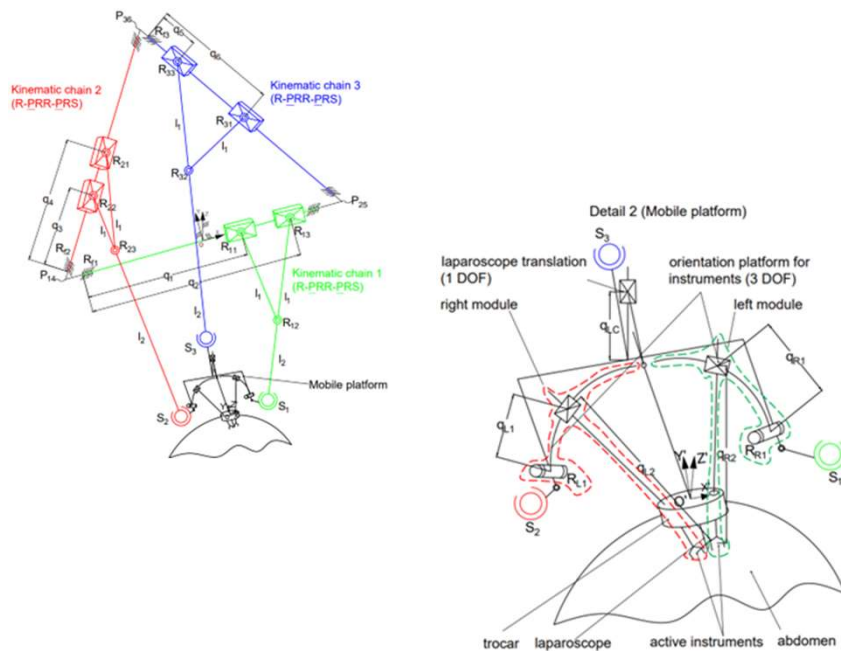
Final design



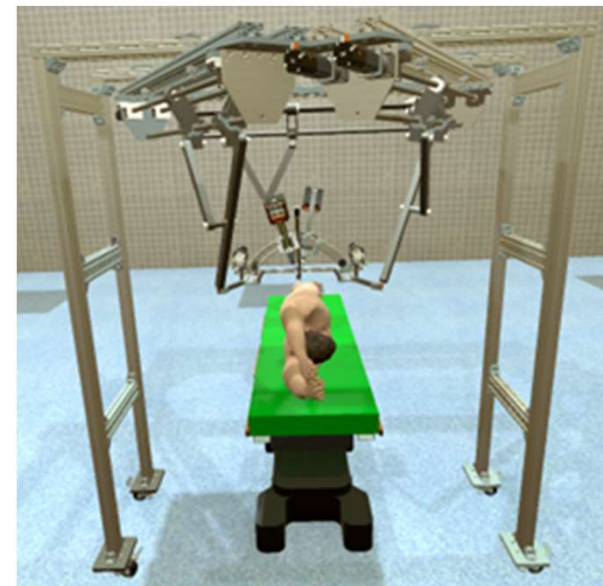
# CHALLENGE project

## Parallel robotic system for Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery

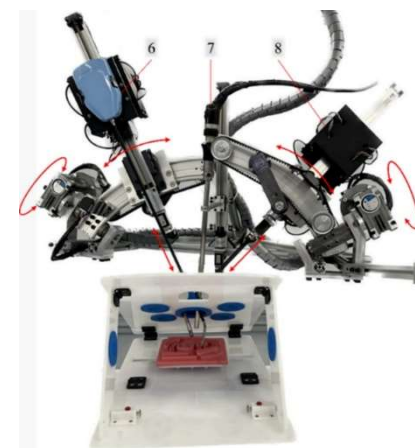
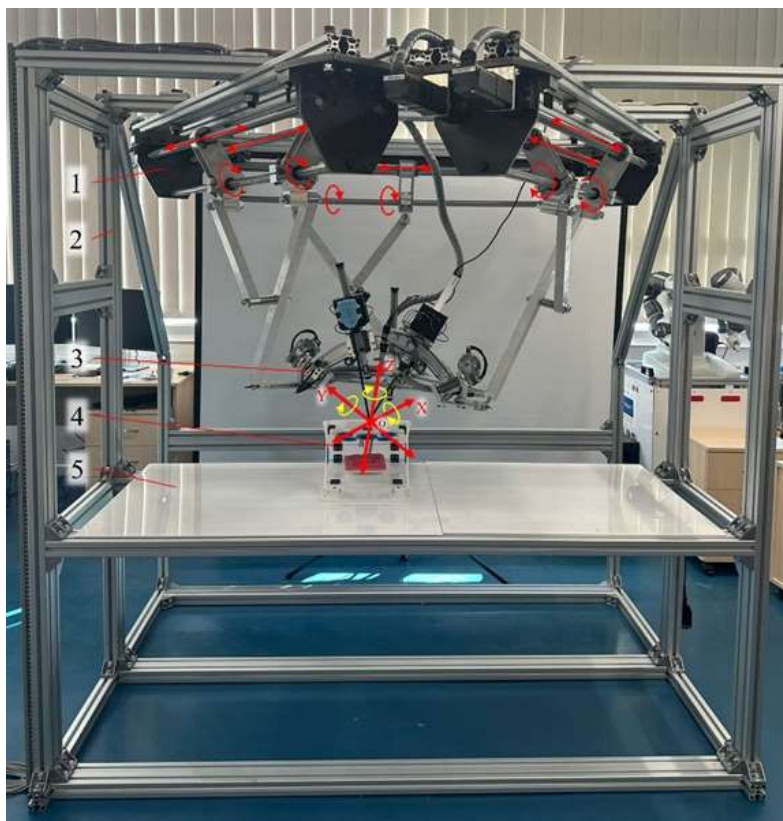
Kinematic scheme



Final design



## Experimental model Parallel robotic system for Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery (2023)

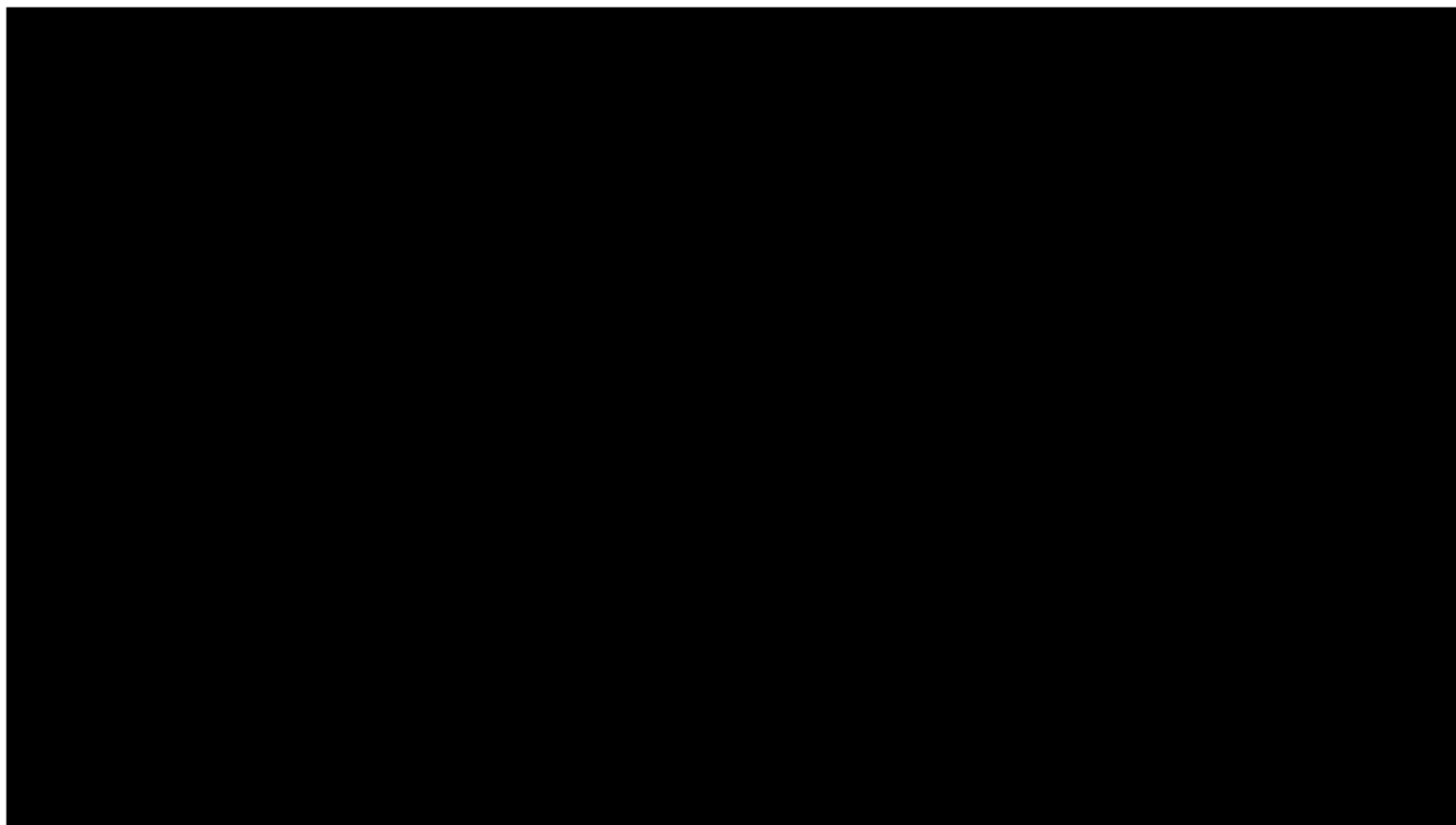




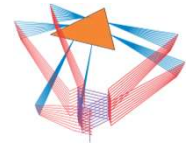


## Experimental model

# Parallel robotic system for Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery (2023)



# CESTER Team



CESTER



*THANK YOU VERY MUCH!*



**Cluj-Napoca (by night)**

**Technical University of Cluj-Napoca**  
**Research Center for Robots Simulation and Testing**  
Memorandumului 28, RO-400114 Cluj-Napoca ROMANIA  
E-Mail: [doina.pisla@mep.utcluj.ro](mailto:doina.pisla@mep.utcluj.ro)

## Research Center for Robots Simulation and Testing - CESTER

