

Laser Lithotripsy

Focused laser light is also used in other surgical procedures, for example, laser-induced lithotripsy (Price *et al.* (1998)) and in neurosurgery. In the latter, the primary issue is a concern for the limited control of the real-time laser interactions with the neural tissue (see, for example, (Taniyama *et al.* (2002))). Another example of the laser-induced cavitation is the procedure known as percutaneous laser disc decompression [56]. Laser energy is introduced into the *nucleus pulposus* (the gelatinous core of a spinal disk) through a needle in order to vaporize a small volume of the nucleus and, by removing that volume, reducing the pressure of the disk and thus relieve the pressure on the neural tissue.