

COMMENTARY | Aye eye Doc

Lasers help bring cataract surgery into focus

By Dr. Rajesh Khanna
Special to the Acorn

There are a number of advantages to using the laser in cataract surgery. Mainly, the surgeon can plan the exact size of the eye capsule opening that is needed for the replacement lens. With lasers, the doctor can also determine the exact pattern in which the old lens will be broken up.

Tests prior to the procedure include obtaining a colored image of the surface of the eye and measuring the length of the eye.

A detailed clinical slit exam is required to assess the thickness, color and hardness of the problem lens. Any weakness in the support of the lens or abnormalities on the lens capsule must be spotted.

This information leads to a plan of action which is entered into the laser software. Modifications can be programmed and, in difficult cases, a second opinion can be obtained.

Laser cataract surgery is safe as it does not stress the lens capsule

or its support. The same holds true in traumatic cataract cases where trauma weakens the support.

Use of the laser is beneficial in making openings in eyes with thick capsules such as those of children.

In people with white or red cataracts, the capsule needs to be stained manually to be visualized, and still it may be difficult to get

centric or oval.

A more circular, central and precise opening is best when implanting an artificial lens. When using the Restor and Tecnis brands, the openings are usually a tad smaller than for Crystalens.

Laser surgery for cataracts is equally helpful in wound management. A precise opening will allow entry and exit of instruments and insertion of the implant without undue stress on the wound. This prevents wound leakage at the end of the procedure and therefore faster healing.

Splitting of the lens by laser is done without any stress on the capsular bag or the zonular support system. Energy from the laser is delivered from the bottom towards the top, which allows gas generated by conversion of the lens material into plasma to escape, as well as allow the subsequent beam to work without interference from gas bubbles.

Sound energy, a commonly used procedure, can cause inflammation and affect the functioning of the cornea.

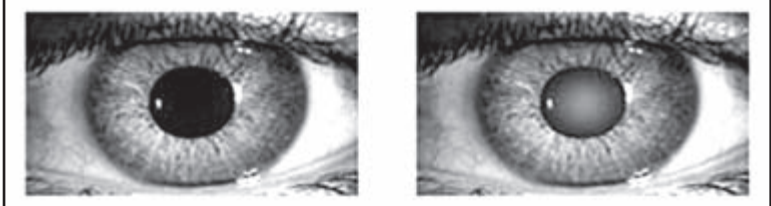
In dense cataracts, the bottom is difficult to perceive so the capsule can be accidentally ruptured. Real-time display with the ability to be precise and avoid the bottom of the bag becomes an advantage when using the laser for cataract procedures.

Breaking apart a hard, afflicted lens can be time consuming with traditional sound wave technology. Lasers decrease the time and

energy required to accomplish the same task.

Further progress in laser technology is coming. One day maybe even robots will be able to do safe and effective cataract surgeries. For now, we must still rely upon the skilled hands of human surgeons.

For more information about laser cataract surgery, visit www.piineye.com or contact the Khanna Institute at (805) 230-2126.



THE EYES HAVE IT—At left is a normal eye in contrast to an eye with a cataract. The picture shows how a cataract obscures the pupil and disrupts vision.

a good view of the area. The laser overcomes this challenge as it employs imaging in real time and vertical cutting to avoid any traction on the zonular support system.

The opening in the capsule can be controlled by the laser down to a tenth of a millimeter. The laser consistently generates an opening of the desired diameter and a shape that is difficult to reproduce manually. An experienced laser surgeon will make a fully accurate opening. Sometimes the shape may be ec-

Exercise

From Page 54 —

life goes on with Parkinson's," said Rollins, a Thousand Oaks resident and retired Westlake High School chemistry teacher who was diagnosed almost two years ago.

In spite of his physical limitations, Rollins still plays his bagpipe, an activity he's enjoyed for 51 years.

Miller said anyone who is newly diagnosed with Parkinson's should come to the support and exercise groups.

"Many people's first reaction is denial. The group allows them to see that it's possible to manage symptoms," said the retired engineer project manager who was diagnosed three years ago.

Parkinson's forces people to slow down because they can no longer multitask, but with patience and practice, people can still be active, said Miller, who recently built a mandolin.

Symptoms of Parkinson's typically begin appearing between the ages of 50 and 60. They develop slowly and often go unnoticed by family, friends and even the person who has them.

The most common symptoms of Parkinson's disease include tremors or shaking, stiff muscles and achiness, limited movement and difficulty with speech. The goal of the exercise class is to enable people to work around their weaknesses so they can retain control of their body and remain independent.

"One of the big issues affecting Parkinson's patients is loss of balance," said Grenn, whose program teaches people how to fall and get back up safely.

Although medication and surgery can help manage the disease, the side effects of medications can be worse than the symptoms.

"Exercise isn't an option—it's mandatory for people with Parkin-

son's. If we don't do it, the muscles atrophy and start freezing up," Grenn said.

Westlake Village resident Gisela Schuett, whose husband, John, was diagnosed with Parkinson's 14 years ago, said the programs in Westlake Village allow people to socialize and share ideas in a warm and caring environment.

"I love it. It's so much fun, and it's a great pleasure to come here," Schuett said.

The exercise program, offered at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 32111 Watergate Road in Westlake Village, takes place every Friday from 9 to 10 a.m. Support groups are on the first Friday of the month from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The programs are free and open to the public. For more information, call Grenn at (805) 230-2462.

Goebel Adult Community Center in Thousand Oaks also hosts a Parkinson's support group led by Leslee Jacobs on the last Wednesday of the month at 1385 E. Janss Road from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m.



SYLVIE BELMOND/Acorn Newspapers

SAY 'AHHH'—Bob Miller limbers up his vocal chords during an exercise class at Westminster Presbyterian Church.

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