

CLEAR TALK

A NEWSLETTER FROM GRUTZMACHER, LEWIS & SIERRA
SPRING 2011

GIVING BACK - THE GIFT OF SIGHT

On a trip last summer to my home country of Honduras, I visited the main eye hospital, Hospital General San Felipe, to help the local ophthalmologists learn a new corneal transplantation technique, known as DSEK.

The cornea is the clear, front part of the eye, which serves as the 'window' through which images enter the eye and are transmitted to the brain. Various conditions or diseases, such as trauma, infections or degenerations can damage the cornea resulting in a decrease or loss of vision. In a corneal transplant the cornea from a human organ donor replaces the patient's damaged cor-



Ruth personally delivered corneas to doctors in Honduras

"As I reflect on this small accomplishment, I realize how rich our lives are when we give to others and how easily our talents and resources can make a real impact."

Dr. Patricia Sierra

nea. The donor cornea is acquired, stored and shipped to the surgeon by the eye bank.

Sierra Eye and Tissue Services, our local eye bank, had generously donated six corneal grafts for my trip. Approximately twenty patients arrived at the hospital in hopes of acquiring a transplant; after examination six were chosen. Unfortunately, since there are no eye banks in Honduras, the rest could only hope for a future miracle. Like them, thousands of other Honduran patients with corneal diseases wish and wait for an opportunity

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Ask Your Doctor

- 1. I've heard that you have to wait until a cataract is 'ripe' before it can be treated. Is this true?**

This is an outdated concept. Ripe cataracts prevent any useful vision and most Americans need surgery far before that. Cataracts are common with age and can occur in one or both eyes. In fact, one in three people over the age of 65 have a cataract.

- 2. We've been told that smoking is bad for the lungs and heart. Does it affect the eyes as well?**

Smoking is a known risk factor for age-related macular degeneration, cataract and thyroid eye disease. Now, the first study to specifically examine the impact of smoking on uveitis (inflammation of the eye's middle layer of tissue) indicates that tobacco smoke likely plays a role in this serious eye disease as well.

- 3. Will working on my computer hurt my eyes?**

Staring at your computer screen or other

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DRS. LEWIS, SIERRA,
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OPHTHALMIC SURGERY IN 3D: THE ROLE OF AVATAR

To say that eye surgery requires precision is an understatement. Whether we are performing LASIK, cataract implants, or glaucoma surgery seeing as much as possible ensures the best results and avoids problems. As you can imagine, the wonderful technology that we use on a regular basis in modern eye surgery demands optimal visualization. This includes high powered microscopes, special mirrors and other tools to ensure clinical success.

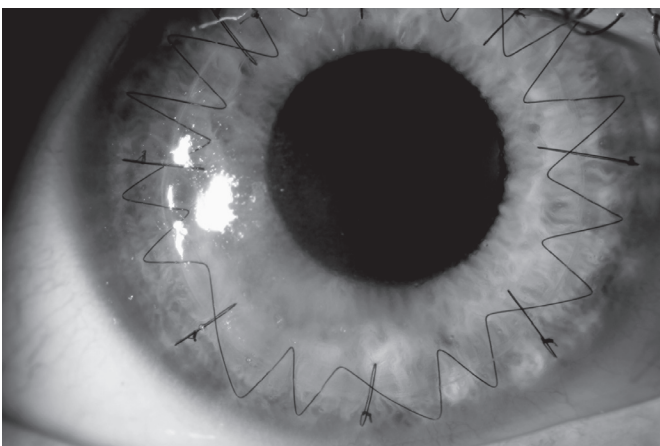
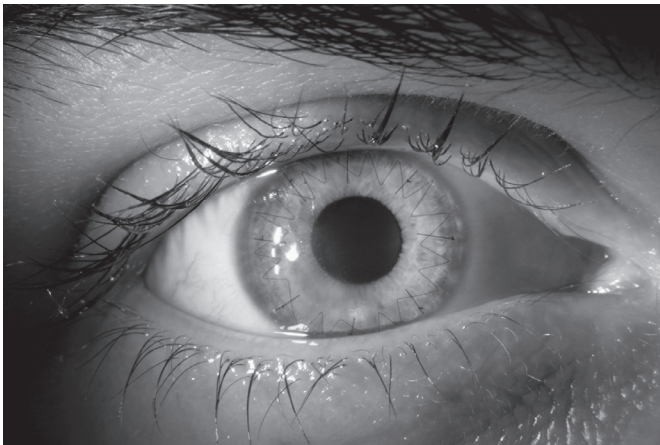
A recent innovation using 3D technology is one more aid. For the last 12 months, at our Capitol City Surgery Center, we have been using the 3D System developed from



Dr. Richard Lewis and OR technician Pamela using 3D TrueVision system in surgery at Capitol City Surgery Center. photo: Sacramento Business Journal

TrueVision, INC (Santa Barbara, CA). This camera is attached to our high powered microscope and projects the 3D image on a large flat screen in the operating room. Using special 3D glasses, everyone in the OR can watch the surgery in 3D. The enhanced visualization reveals surgical fields in a manner that allows greater appreciation of depth. This helps avoid problems in the OR but also is a valuable tool in teaching the latest procedures to other ophthalmologists and allied health personnel. The 3D phenomenon we hear so much about in movies and home television is also coming into the OR!

TRANSPLANTS FOR KIDS



Young man who underwent corneal transplant for treatment of keratoconus at Capitol City Surgery Center

Teens, children, and even infants sometimes need corneal transplants, although most such surgeries are performed in adults. A recent study of young patients found the highest rate of transplant success in teens who were treated for keratoconus. About 75 percent of them achieved 20/40 vision or better, though most had been legally blind (20/200 or worse) before the surgery. Nearly all of the transplanted corneas were still healthy 10 years after surgery.

When checked as adults, about 70 percent of people who received transplants as 5 to 12 year-olds still had functioning corneas.

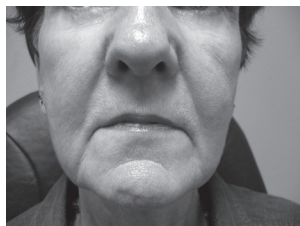
Promising Glaucoma Research

Someday we will treat glaucoma with an implant placed in the eye that delivers medication internally. It would deliver drug for one year before needing a replacement. Wouldn't it be great to be free of placing eye drops every day and avoiding the monthly visit to the drug store! That is the goal of a project we are starting in conjunction with Allergan later this spring. The criteria for enrollment in this study are based on the level of your eye pressure, the extent of your glaucoma optic nerve damage and your willingness to participate. If you're interested in getting involved contact our study coordinator, Ming-Cee, (COA) by phone or email: ming-cee@eyelasik.com.

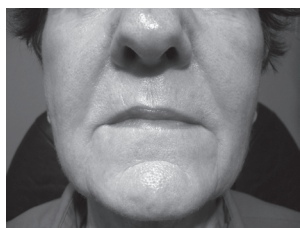
A second glaucoma project in development involves using a surgical implant to better control eye pressure. What distinguishes this surgery from others we have used in the past has to do with the simplicity and safety of placement. We're always looking for a better way to control eye pressure in glaucoma and these two studies are helping us get closer to that goal.

NOBODY LIKES WRINKLES

Age, sunlight and other lifestyle factors cause collagen in the skin to diminish. With this, our skin loses structure and volume, and unwelcome lines and wrinkles appear. Dermal fillers offer a safe and effective non-surgical solution for smoothing out fine lines and wrinkles. Unlike face-lifts that stretch the skin, fillers add volume for a more natural youthful appearance.



before



after

There are a variety of dermal fillers to choose from. Synthetic hyaluronic acid gel (Juvederm, Restylane) is a natural collagen-like substance that is found throughout our bodies. It is a minimally invasive office procedure that takes minutes and can be done on your lunch hour. There are usually mild side effects and very little pain. Slight swelling and redness is common

after the injections, generally lasting from hours to a day or two. Sometimes there can be a bruise. The duration of hyaluronic acid fillers vary; for most patients results can last up to a year.



Dr. Jonathan P. Perlman

Another commonly used dermal filler is Radiesse, which is made up of minute calcium microspheres. Once injected, this product adds volume immediately like other fillers, but also stimulates production of your own collagen to replenish lost facial volume and smooth out the signs of aging. I like to use this product around the corners of the mouth. Other commonly treated areas are the smile lines around the nose and mouth, fine lines above the mouth, frown lines between the eyes, and to make cupid lips.

There are a variety of dermal fillers on the market today. Schedule an appointment with Dr. Perlman to see what fillers can do to help you reduce your wrinkles.

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to regain their sight. For me, this was a rude awakening to the misery and poverty of my native land, especially when compared to the vast accessibility of corneal tissue here in America where there is no waiting list and insurance plans usually cover most or at least part of the costs of surgery.

Upon my return to Sacramento, I contacted various eye banks and explained the tremendous need of corneal tissue in Honduras. Thanks to the generosity of the Alabama Eye Bank, we have been able to send approximately 70 corneas to Honduras. In December Ruth, our valued technician, hand carried some of these corneas as a Christmas gift to those in most need.

As I reflect on this small accomplishment, I realize how rich our lives are when



Happy recipients of corneas sent to Honduras

we give to others and how easily our talents and resources can make a real impact. If you would like to help make a difference by donating to this cause please contact our office. Help us give back the gift of sight.

Dr. Patricia Sierra

Did You Know?

Staring at the sun for too long can cause something called *solar retinopathy*. Many times people will stare at the sun not realizing it causes any harm, only to later have a blind spot in the middle of their vision and become very sensitive to light. There is no treatment, but if the exposure was only for a few seconds there is a reasonable possibility that one's vision will improve over several weeks to months. Unfortunately, in some cases permanent damage can occur to vision. This is why ophthalmologists recommend that you never look directly at the sun. Looking directly at the sun at any time, including during an eclipse, can damage the eye's retina from solar radiation. When you are out in the sun make sure your sunglasses block 100 percent of UV-A and UV-B rays.

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digital devices for long periods won't cause permanent eye damage, but your eyes may feel dry and tired. What to do? Remember to 'blink'; shift your eyes away from the screen and focus on objects at least 20 feet away; use artificial tears to refresh your eyes. And don't forget to take regular breaks. Sleep deprivation or wearing incorrect contact lenses could also contribute to eye discomfort.

Do you have a question? Email it to jaimep@eyelasik.com and we may answer it in a future issue.

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AGE RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION (ARMD)

In a major study of over 3,000 patients with age-related macular degeneration, the "Age-Related Eye Disease Study Research Group", funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), found that large doses of antioxidants plus zinc delayed progression of Age Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD).

Eye doctors at 11 research centers measured and assessed retinal photos and measured visual acuity in high-risk groups of patients with ARMD who received one of the following;

1. Antioxidants (500mg vitamin C; 400 IU Vitamin E; and 15 mg beta carotene) alone,
2. Zinc (80 mg as zinc oxide and copper, 2 mg as cupric oxide) alone,
3. Antioxidants plus zinc (both as listed above),
4. Placebo (sugar pill).

The results showed that patients that received the antioxidants plus zinc had a reduction in the rate of loss of visual acuity. No significant side effects were observed. It is concluded that if you're older than 55, have intermediate or advanced ARMD, and are without contraindications (such as smoking), that you should consider taking supplemental antioxidants plus zinc to reduce the progression of the disease. (*Archives of Ophthalmology*, vol. 119, oct, 2001, p1417-1436)

Can a Daily Multivitamin Alone Provide the Same High Levels of Antioxidants and Zinc as the AREDS Formulation?

No. The AREDS formulation's levels of antioxidants and zinc are considerably

higher than the amounts in any daily multivitamin.

Will Taking the AREDS Formulation Prevent a Person from Developing AMD?

No. There is no known treatment that can prevent the development of ARMD. The study did not show that the AREDS formulation prevented people from developing early signs of ARMD. No recommendation has been made for taking the AREDS formulation to prevent early ARMD. See your eye doctor to see if you're a candidate for such therapy.

Next letter we'll discuss the benefits of fish oil (omega-3's) for eye health!

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