



Supplement

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Most Patients seem Happy after LASIK But They Still May be Having problems, German Study Suggests

By John F. Henahan

REGENSBURG-""Although most patients who undergo myopic LASIK appear quite happy with the vision they achieve after surgery, they may, in fact, have measurable and sometimes significant problems with glare, halos and contrast sensitivity, according to Chris Lohmann, MD, University Eye Clinic, Regensburg, Germany.

In a study which included 50 patients who underwent LASIK to correct myopia ranging from -6 to -12 D, all were quite happy with the outcome months later and they all had post-operative refractions within 1 D of emmetropia. In addition, while a few noted that they did experience glare and halos, they all remained quite pleased with their visual outcome. However, when they were examined with a variety of objective measuring instruments, their vision was not really as good as they thought, Dr. Lohmann told a symposium on LASIK Complications at the autumn ESCRS Congress in Brussels.

He and his associates found that 7.3% of the eyes had lost one line of best-corrected visual acuity. That compares with a one line BCVA reduction seen in various studies of 4.5% to 24.9% and was not statistically significant. However, 2.3% lost 2 lines, which when compared with a 2-line loss ranging from 0.9 to 6.2% did reach statistical significance, he said.

Low Contrast and Glare Problems

When the Regensburg investigators used objective measurements to detect contrast sensitivity, they found that 24% had worse vision after surgery than they did before. That level of contrast sensitivity corresponds to dim-light conditions on a late autumn afternoon, and the difference was statistically significant. In addition, at 5% contrast, which simulates to night-time vision, 54% had problems, Dr. Lohmann pointed out.

"To measure glare problems, the patients were examined with the stray light test by Lohmann and Fitzke, which measures glare caused by the light scattering effects of debris at the epithelial interface and irregularities of the corneal surface, almost all of the 50 patients were found to have some degree of glare. However, 53.8% had significant problems with this test, which could be considered serious enough reduce their vision to the extent that it would interfere with their ability to drive a car," he said, continuing:

"In another computerised test designed to measure halos objectively, 60% were found to have some level of halos, although only 32% of the patients had subjective complaints of halos. For example, one patient who underwent LASIK for myopia of -7 D, was absolutely happy with his visual outcome, even though the test showed that huge halos were in fact occurring.

"Therefore, even when our BCVA Snellen measurements tell us that the patient is seeing quite well, these objective measurements tell us that they may be having problems especially at night. What this suggests is that even though patients don't come back very often after they undergo LASIK and are apparently happy, they may be having problems.

"But if they do come back and you question them carefully, you may find that they are no longer driving cars any more or their vision is somewhat disturbed in the evenings. For that reason, I think it would be useful to alert the patients that these kinds of phenomena can occur and that they should be aware of them."

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