

New Treatment Poor Vision In Old Age

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(Ivanhoe Newswire) -- Presbyopia is an inevitable eye disorder. It occurs mostly in people over 40. It is characterized by blurred vision, where the lenses gradually lose their ability to focus on close-up objects. There is a new and effective way to permanently treat presbyopia that is currently being used in Europe, and soon in the U.S.

Almost everyone by the age of 50 or 60 experiences blurry close-up vision, but their ability to see distance remains good. More than 60 million people in the U.S., and 400 million people worldwide, are presbyopic. Reading glasses are a solution, but many people are interested in a glasses-free solution. Options now available include a form of LASIK that improves near vision in one eye, called monovision, and intraocular lenses (IOLs) that replace the eyes' natural lenses. Within a few years, several new presbyopia treatments described in today's Scientific Program will likely be available in the U.S.

A new type of micro-lens, the Flexivue, was implanted in the corneas of 15 patients. The patients were followed for 12 months after the surgery. The procedure lasted only 10 minutes.

The procedure consisted of placing an extremely thin lens into the cornea of the patient's non-dominant eye through a tiny pocket made with highly precise femtosecond laser. The specific vision-correcting prescription for each patient was incorporated in the outer area of the lens. After the lens was inserted, the pocket sealed itself and held the lens in place. On average, treated eye near vision improved from 20/100 to 20/25 without glasses, a major improvement. Distance vision decreased from 20/20 to 20/40. Vision remained stable in both eyes post-surgery in all patients through the follow-up period.

"This corneal lens implant appears to be a safe, effective way to correct presbyopia in people aged 45 to 60," Ioannis G Pallikaris, MD, University Hospital of Crete, Greece was quoted as saying. "Ninety-eight percent of patients were satisfied with their vision; 69 percent reported 'excellent' and 30 percent 'good' near vision in our survey. Ninety-two percent said they no longer used glasses."

There were no surgery-related complications, but some patients reported glare around lights, and some had reduced contrast sensitivity. Distance vision in the implanted eye is less influenced and remains better than it would be when a LASIK monovision procedure corrects for near vision. Another key advantage is that, unlike LASIK and related refractive surgical procedures, the effects of corneal lens implants can be reversed by lens removal.

SOURCE: 2010 Joint Meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) and Middle East-Africa Council of Ophthalmology (MEACO) held October 15-19 in Chicago, Illinois

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