



What's New in Ophthalmology Today?

CATARACTS AND THE QUALITY OF YOUR LIFE

Cataracts can cause more than just loss of vision; they are also associated with a loss of cognitive function (the way a person processes information) and depressive mental status in elderly patients. Seeing, thinking, and how you feel are very important factors in determining your quality of life.

In a study just reported in the *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, 102 patients undergoing bilateral cataract surgery were evaluated using three tests. The first test, the National Eye Institute Visual Functioning Questionnaire to assess the vision-related quality of life; the second, Mini-Mental State Examination tests for cognitive function, and the third, Beck Depression Inventory measures the depressive mental state. Dr. Kotaro Ishii and his team evaluated patients prior to surgery and two months after surgery.

The results were very important. Good vision, clear thinking and depression are strongly related. "Cataract surgery significantly improved vision-related quality of life in elderly patients, and cognitive impairment and depressive mental status improved in parallel with improvements in vision-related quality of life." After cataract surgery, significant improvement in the patient's vision was associated with an improvement in the patient's mental ability and a significant reduction of depression.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology has designated August as Cataract Awareness Month. Clearer vision is associated with clearer thinking and less depression. Good news for a better tomorrow.

RAANANAH S. KATZ, M.D., F.A.C.S.
1776 N. Pine Island Road, Suite 214
Plantation, FL 33322
866.295.9984

*Board Certified American Board of Ophthalmology
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