

Multifocal intraocular lenses: a happy ending to cataracts

Cataract removal is perhaps the most common type of surgical procedure performed today.

It is estimated that 22 million procedures are carried out each year, resulting in the exponential development of surgical methods and associated technology. The growing need for this intervention is associated with demographic changes linked to the ageing process, a major reason for the appearance of cataracts.

Cataracts are a disease of the eye and consist in partial or total opaqueness of the lens and/or of the capsule. The lens acts in a refractive capacity enabling the eye to focus on close up images. Several factors are associated to the appearance of cataracts, the main causes being age and diabetes.

The main symptom of cataracts is a gradual loss of vision, both far and near, which does not improve with refractive correction. In addition to a quantitative loss of vision, the patient may have qualitative loss as well. The symptoms are cloudy or blurred vision, such as looking through a waterfall (hence the reason for the name), but also a decrease in brightness, contrast and colour. Another

common symptom is difficulty in looking at a light, particularly when the cataract reached the central portion of the lens, or the axis of vision.

The only treatment available is surgical removal of the lens, replacing it with an intraocular lens. As the patient's lens is no longer transparent it does not let light through and is the cause of the blurred vision, replacing it, is the only solution.

Intraocular lenses are bio-compatible prosthesis used as a substitute for the human lens. There are various types available. The patient's cataract is removed by phacoemulsification, where the cataract is fragmented using ultrasonic energy and the opaque lens is simultaneously aspirated. The patient's lens is then replaced by an intraocular lens. The advantage of multifocal intraocular lenses is due to the fact that they permit visual correction for both far and near sightedness. It is for this reason that 95% of patients that undergo this type of surgery no longer need to use spectacles.

The experience and number of cases of the Hospital Particular do Algarve in the latest generation of multifocal lens replacement has been on the increase. This is due to the HPA Health Group's need to make available the best possible technology for the benefit of its patient's.

In the opinion of the Theatre Nurses who specialise in ophthalmic surgery, cataract surgery is perhaps the surgical intervention that results in the highest degree of patient satisfaction, due to the achievement of its immediate and excellent results. The number of HPA cases have increased in an exceptional way due to various reasons: we have a very well trained team in this type of intervention that has resulted in this procedure having now become routine, state of the art equipment, such as the microscopes and phacoemulsifiers which result in the percentage of complications being close to zero. The fact that this surgery can be carried out in an out-patient context, (the patient is admitted in the morning for surgery and



is discharged on the same day), is more reassuring for patients. Additionally, we have implemented a specific procedure for monitoring patients postoperatively, which has resulted in greater satisfaction: the nurse who assisted during the surgery, personally phones the patient 24 hours after surgery and once again one week later. With this approach we have the opportunity to monitor the whole post-operative procedure, to repeat some recommendations, allay doubts, prevent complications when they arise and

leave our direct contact number in case of problems or questions.

We believe that we possess all the necessary conditions in improving the quality of life of all those who chose the HPA Health Group for their surgery.

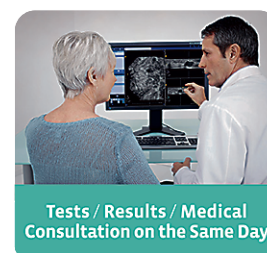
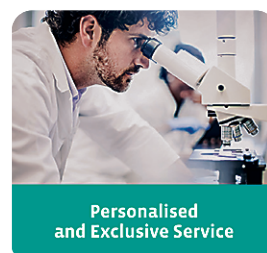
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