



INSIGHT

Cataract Surgery Reduces Auto Crashes, Saves Lives

Cataract removal with lens replacement appears to save lives and millions of dollars by dramatically reducing the number of auto accidents, Australian researchers have documented in a large-scale study.

Jonathon Ng, M.D. and colleagues found that cataract surgery reduced the frequency of all auto crashes by 12.6 percent among a study sample of more than 27,000 elderly drivers in western Australia. The investigators calculated that the cost savings from this accident reduction was about \$4.3 million in Australian dollars (roughly equivalent to U.S. dollars). Each operation saved about \$150 in crash costs. By including all crashes rather than just fatal and hospitalization crashes, all possible cost-saving benefits of cataract surgery were taken into account.

At the outset of the research project, the investigators sought to determine the impact of a common, vision-improving treatment like cataract removal on crash rates. If the impact was significant, they questioned if health systems should make sure that people don't wait excessively between cataract diagnosis and surgery. To answer these questions, Dr. Ng and his colleagues studied accident rates for western Australian residents before and after cataract surgery on the first eye.

In Australia and other nations, patients often have to wait months to receive surgery after a cataract is diag-

nosed. The study argues that this delay significantly impacts not only patients' quality of life, but public safety, health care and property costs as well. The authors say additional research is needed to compare crash rates before and after cataract surgery on patients' second eye.

"The study confirms that cataract surgery is not only clinically safe and effective, but also cost-effective as well," said Dr. Lee Wan, Coastal Eye Medical Director.

"And this study only looked at savings from safer driving, which is probably minor compared to the benefits of the improved productivity and quality of life provided by this surgery to so many patients."

Cataracts — which occur when the eye's natural crystalline lens becomes cloudy and opaque and hardens — are the leading cause of vision impairment in older people. By age

60, many people have some lens opacity and by 70, nearly all have a significant cataract in one or both eyes. Surgical removal of cataracts followed by implantation of intraocular lens implants (IOLs) dramatically improves vision for most patients.

This research was presented at last October's Scientific Program of the 2010 American Academy of Ophthalmology-Middle East Africa Council of Ophthalmology joint meeting in Chicago.



Dr. Marquez Leads Tri-County Optometrists

Dr. Ruth Marquez, Coastal Eye optometrist, has been elected President of the Tri-County Optometric Society (TCOS). A division of the California Optometric Association, TCOS numbers 120 member optometrists in practice throughout the region from Thousand Oaks to San Luis Obispo.

Dr. Marquez is gratified at the vote of confidence and is enthusiastic about serving her fellow TCOS members. Her special priorities for the year are to increase membership and promote philanthropic care.

“My hope is that more young optometrists will get involved in the organization,” she says. “I would also like to see more optometrists involved in giving back to their communities. I have met many wonderful optometrists who do this year after year, so I have much support and feedback to gain from them.”



Ruth Marquez, O.D.

Dr. Marquez' roles in her one-year term as President include keeping all members abreast of federal and state regulations and laws pertaining to optometry, and helping organize TCOS' quarterly meetings and continuing education events.

Leadership: A Coastal Eye Tradition

Dr. Marquez continues a Coastal Eye tradition of medical community service and leadership. Dr. Wan has served as Executive Vice President of the Ventura County Ophthalmology Society for many years, and also been active in leadership roles in the VCMA, CAEPS, CMA, and the St John's Medical Staff.

“Leadership is one of our important core values,” says Dr. Wan. “We are proud of Dr. Marquez and her accomplishments, and the recognition and respect she has earned from her peers.”



Eye Care Notebook : A Healthful Diet Promotes Healthy Eyes

◆ A recently reported study of more than 1,800 women found that those who scored among the highest for following nationally recommended dietary guidelines had a 37 percent lower risk for nuclear cataracts, the most common cause of visual impairment in the U.S.

The healthy diet linked to this reduced risk featured high quantities of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein including beans, fish, eggs and low quantities of salt and fat.

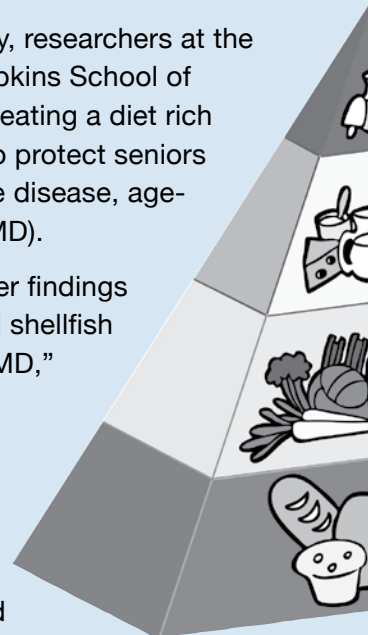
Overall, a higher prevalence of cataracts was associated with poor diet and other lifestyle factors including smoking and obesity.

The findings were reported by Julie A. Mares, Ph.D. and her colleagues at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in *Archives of Ophthalmology*.

◆ In another large-scale study, researchers at the Wilmer Eye Institute of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore found that eating a diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids appears to protect seniors against the onset of a serious eye disease, age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

“Our study corroborates earlier findings that eating omega-3-rich fish and shellfish may protect against advanced AMD,” said lead author Sheila K. West.

◆ Two Australian studies also published in *Archives of Ophthalmology* show that adults who followed a Mediterranean-style diet high in omega-3 fatty acids found in fish, nuts and olive oil and low in



The USDA Food Guide Pyramid



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Dr. Wan Again Named One of the ‘Best Doctors in America’

As he has been for the past 16 years, W. Lee Wan, M.D., Coastal Eye’s Medical Director, has been elected by his professional peers for inclusion in “Best Doctors in America® — 1996 to 2012.”

Compiled by Boston-based Best Doctors, Inc., the Best Doctors in America® database is the result of an exhaustive survey of more than 45,000 physicians in the U.S. Only those doctors recognized to be in the top 3-5% of their specialty earn the honor of being named one of the Best Doctors in America®.

“These are the doctors that other physicians recognize as best in their fields,” says Best Doctors. “Doctors cannot pay a fee and are not paid to be listed and cannot nominate or vote for themselves.”

The only way to be recognized as one of the Best Doctors in America is for a physician to earn high marks

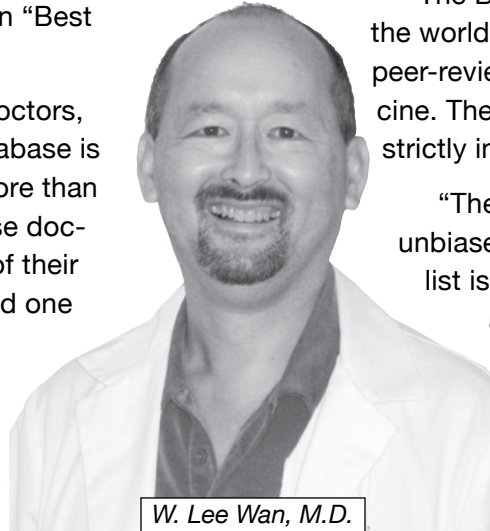
for clinical ability from his or her fellow doctors.

The Best Doctors database is reputed to be the world’s premier effort to create a validated, peer-reviewed database of excellence in medicine. The methodology is rigorously impartial and strictly independent.

“The Best Doctors in America® list is truly unbiased,” says the organization. “Today the list is respected by the medical profession and patients alike as the source of top quality medical information.”

Founded in 1989 by physicians affiliated with Harvard Medical School to provide excellent medical consultation services, Best Doctors today provides its services globally to more

than 20 million people, serving large employers, insurance plans, government and other groups in more than 30 countries.



W. Lee Wan, M.D.



the trans fats found in baked and processed foods have a much lower risk of developing AMD. The investigators reported that people who ate higher levels of trans fats more often were more likely to develop late-stage AMD. Trans fats have been shown to increase the risk of heart disease by increasing cholesterol levels and possibly spurring inflammation. Researchers speculate that these fats might also have a similar effect on the blood vessels in the eyes. In contrast, olive oil contains heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids and other beneficial compounds such as antioxidants and anti-inflammatory components.

◆ In yet another recent study, researchers found that people whose diets had higher levels of certain nutrients — vitamins C and E, zinc, lutein, zeaxanthin, omega-3 fatty acids — and had

a lower-sugar diet were less likely to develop early and advanced AMD.

“Although the researchers say clinical studies are needed before physicians can begin recommending specific nutrient doses or dietary patterns to AMD patients, there’s no need for people to delay adding healthy food to their shopping carts,” says a statement from the American Academy of Ophthalmology’s *Eyesmart* program. “Sources of AMD-protective nutrients include citrus fruits, vegetable oils, nuts, whole grains, dark green leafy vegetables and cold water fish.

“The old adage that eating carrots will improve your vision is not entirely true. It is actually vitamin A, a nutrient found in carrots, that helps protect your eyes; this is the same nutrient that is found in many other vegetables including leafy greens, spinach, broccoli and sweet potatoes. The important thing is to make sure to include a variety of vegetables in your diet for good eye health.”





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Coastal Eye Scores High in National Satisfaction Survey

The nitty-gritty question on Coastal Eye Specialists' 2010 Patient Satisfaction Survey was the final one: "Would you recommend our eye care practice to your friends?"

97.5 percent of respondents said they would.

In fact, Coastal Eye surpassed the mean scores on all measures of patient satisfaction in the survey of medical eye care practices across the nation, taken by the respected BSM Consulting Group over the past seven years. More than 300 practices were represented in the national database.

Patients used a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) to complete the survey. For the first 11 (out of 14) questions, the national database average score was 4.72. Coastal Eye's average score was 4.87.

The survey, designed to rate total patient satisfaction with everything from courtesy of the receptionist to post-operative follow-up care, was a handout/mail-in evaluation collected last summer.

The survey is now an ongoing project, available online (see box).



Your Comments are important to us

TAKE OUR PATIENT SURVEY

Please go to our web site, www.coastaleye.net. Click on this icon on the left side of the home page.

To log in:
 username is **pa9830700**;
 password is **survey**.

"It was very gratifying that we did well on all the benchmarks," said Dr. Lee Wan, Coastal Eye's Medical Director. "All the eye care offices surveyed were already high-performing practices, concerned enough about providing high-quality service to participate in the study. We were in very good company. So to participate in a survey like that, and then actually beat the averages was a nice compliment."

But the real reason to conduct a survey, he said, is to find out where there's room for improvement. "There are some areas where we didn't beat the benchmarks by as much as others, so those are where we must focus our efforts."

The survey established internal benchmarks for future surveys — and will be used as a tool to evaluate future quality improvement measures.



Notice: Coastal Eye Specialists distributes this newsletter to educate our patients about eye health and care, and the services we provide. It is normally mailed to patients who have had a recent appointment in our office. If you wish to be added to or removed from our mailing list, or receive a copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices, please call (805) 983-0700 or send an e-mail to info@coastaleye.net.