



Progression of Diabetic Retinopathy Following Cataract Extraction in Chinese Patients

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In order to determine if cataract extraction causes a progression of diabetic retinopathy, we retrospectively recorded the degree of non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy and visual acuity in 18 consecutive diabetic patients who had cataract extraction in one eye (study group) and compare them with the degree of diabetic retinopathy and visual acuity in 18 diabetic patient who had no cataract surgery (control group). We found a significant asymmetry in the degree of diabetic retinopathy in the study group where the operated eye had significantly worse retinopathy.

Thirteen (72%) of the eighteen study up patients had significant asymmetric retinopathy (with the more severe retinopathy in the operated eye in every case). Asymmetric retinopathy occurred only in six (33%) of the eighteen control group patients.

In terms of visual improvement diabetic eyes that had cataract surgery did not do as well when compared with non diabetic eyes, with no eye seeing 24/25 or better. Six eyes (33%) achieve 20/30 to 20/40, ten eyes (56%) in 20/50 to 20/80, and two eyes (11%) see 20/100 or worse.

This strongly suggested that a worsening of non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy takes place following cataract extraction. Possible preventive and remedial measures will be discussed.