

## Cataract surgery rates make huge gains across Europe

In virtually every country, cataract surgeons performed more operations per capita in 2002 than ever before.

Of the 10 European countries with statistics from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, all but one reported an increase in the number of cataract operations performed per 100,000 of population between 2001 and 2002.

For instance, the rate of cataract surgery between 2001 and 2002 increased in:

- Belgium by 4%;
- Denmark by 14%;
- Finland by 24%;
- Hungary by 3%;
- Italy by 7%;
- Luxembourg by 5%;
- Portugal by 13%;
- United Kingdom by 8%.

Only in Ireland did the rate of cataract surgery fall in 2002. The rate in Ireland fell by 9% to 441.6 from 485.6 operations per 100,000 in 2001. The 2001-2002 gains in the rest of the European countries surveyed came on top of huge gains in the early and mid-1990s.

For instance, the rate of cataract surgery has:

- more than doubled in Portugal since 1993;
- more than doubled in Finland since 1992;
- more than doubled in Italy since 1996;
- nearly doubled in the UK since 1995;
- nearly doubled in France since 1993;
- risen by 43% in Denmark since 1995;
- risen by 26% in the Netherlands since 1999;
- risen by 25% in Ireland since 1995;
- risen 11% in Hungary since 1999.

Of the 10 European countries with OECD

NUMBER OF CATARACT OPERATIONS PERFORMED PER 100,000 OF POPULATION – 1992-2002

|                | 1992 | 1993  | 1994  | 1995  | 1996  | 1997  | 1998  | 1999  | 2000   | 2001   | 2002   |
|----------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| Australia      |      |       |       |       |       |       |       | 896.5 | 667.9  | 712.3  | 752.8  |
| Belgium        |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |        | 604.9  | 673.2  |
| Canada         |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 1191.0 | 1237.9 | 1109.3 |
| Denmark        |      |       |       |       |       | 358.6 | 364.2 | 382.4 | 428.3  | 429.5  | 451.2  |
| Finland        |      | 323.9 | 372.8 | 441.6 | 457.3 | 536.8 | 589.5 | 620.9 | 650.0  | 638.9  | 582.9  |
| France         |      |       | 430.3 |       |       |       | 625.3 | 656.5 | 683.5  | 726.2  | 757.5  |
| Hungary        |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 669.5  | 698.7  | 723.6  |
| Ireland        |      |       |       |       | 354.2 | 364.6 | 361.4 | 363.4 | 366.0  | 446.7  | 485.6  |
| Italy          |      |       |       |       | 356.7 | 431.0 | 507.4 | 579.5 | 659.9  | 735.2  | 783.8  |
| Korea          |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |        |        | 315.8  |
| Luxembourg     |      |       |       |       |       | 589.5 | 622.3 | 745.1 | 666.1  | 713.7  | 730.4  |
| Mexico         |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |        |        | 44.0   |
| Netherlands    |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 469.1  | 548.6  | 591.7  |
| New Zealand    |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |        | 243.2  | 219.5  |
| Portugal       |      |       | 83.1  | 93.7  | 97.8  | 106.0 | 114.5 | 111.7 | 140.7  | 145.6  | 195.8  |
| Switzerland    |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |        |        | 476.6  |
| United Kingdom |      |       |       | 282.0 | 318.9 | 341.8 |       |       | 424.6  | 444.7  | 512.4  |

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statistics from 2002, Italy reported the highest rate of surgery – 783.8 operations per 100,000 of population. That figure represented an increase of about 6.5% over the 2001 figure of 735.2 operations per 100,000.

Although 2002 figures aren't available for France, it is conceivable that French cataract surgeons performed in 2002 substantially more than the 2001 rate of 757.5 operations per 100,000 of population. Even a modest increase of 4% in the French cataract surgery statistics from 2001 to 2002 would have eclipsed the Italian 2002 statistics.

Of those countries who reported statistics

for 2002, Luxembourg was not far behind Italy, with a rate of 766 operations per 100,000 of population. That figure represented an increase of about 5% over the 2001 figure of 730.4 operations per 100,000.

Hungary was third in 2002, with 745.1 operations per 100,000 of population; that figure represented a 3% increase over the 2001 figure of 723.6 operations.

However, the surgery rates of European countries that reported to the OECD are still behind those of Canada. In 2001, the latest year for which statistics were available from Canada, ophthalmologists there performed

1,109.3 cataract operations for every 100,000 persons. On the bottom of the list was New Zealand, with its rate of 199.8 cataract operations per 100,000 of population.

Even within Europe, however, the rates of cataract surgery vary considerably. Compared to Italy's rate of 783.8 operations per 100,000 of population, Portugal recorded a cataract surgery rate of 221.3 per 100,000; Ireland recorded a rate of 441.6 per 100,000; and Denmark recorded a rate of 514.1 per 100,000.