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in Paris

Incision size decreases, presbyopic surgery upsurge in French survey

increase in presbyopia surgery and an increasing use of refractive IOLs," he said.

As well as providing valuable insights into trends and developments in clinical practice, Dr Gold's questionnaire serves as a useful barometer of the current well being of French ophthalmology in general.

The proportion of French ophthalmologists with a low volume of cataract surgery continued to decline, with 13% performing fewer than 100 cataract surgeries per year, down from 22% in 1998.

The proportion performing between 100 and 199 procedures annually increased slightly from 27% to 28%, while the proportion performing 200 to 300 per year remained stable at 23%. At the high volume end of the spectrum, those treating 300 to 500 cases per year increased to 22% compared to 15% for 1998, while the proportion treating 500 or more rose from 10% to almost 12%.

Phacoemulsification is now almost universally established as standard in cataract surgery in France, according to Dr Gold, former Head of the Department of Ophthalmology at the Cognacq-Jay Hospital, Paris, and now in private practice at Le Raincy, France. In 1998, 95% of surgeons used phacoemulsification for most of their cataract extractions, compared to over 98% in 2003.

Most respondents (92%) used clear corneal incisions. The size of

the incisions used by French ophthalmic surgeons for cataract surgery has continued to decrease over the past few years.

In 1998, 28% of respondents said they used incisions greater than 4.0 mm compared to only 3% in 2003, while those using incisions 3.2 mm or smaller took a major leap to 49% from 34% in 2002. Almost 4% of surgeons now routinely use incisions of less than 2.8 mm compared to less than 1% when the survey started.

The use of injectors for cataract surgery has shown a dramatic increase in recent years, noted Dr Gold, with 78% of respondents using injectors in 2003 compared to 61% in 2002 and just 21% in 1998.

Duovisc continues to be the most popular viscoelastic in France, used by 58.5% of respondents, followed by Viscoat (15%) and the remainder evenly divided between Ophtalin, Amvisc, Healon, and Healon GV.

OUTPATIENT SURGERY YET TO DOMINATE

Ambulatory cataract surgery was practiced by just over half of respondents (53%). Some 18% of respondents kept patients in hospital overnight. Just over one quarter of surgeons kept patients in for two nights, with just 3% keeping them in for more than two nights. In terms of anaesthesia, Dr Gold found a slight trend

towards greater use of topical anaesthesia, up to 17% for 2003 compared to 6% for 1999.

However, the French preference for peribulbar remains strong (56%) even though its use has declined from its peak of 77% in 2000. More than 13% of respondents used topical plus intracameral lidocaine, another 10% said they used sub-Tenons anaesthesia, while five percent preferred retrobulbar. Only one percent used general anaesthesia. For implants, foldable acrylics continue to gain in popularity, with a slight preference for hydrophobic acrylic IOLs (66%) compared to

hydrophilic (60%, up from 49% in 2002).

The years of Dr Gold's survey charts the steady decline in use of PMMA IOLs, down from 57% in 1998 to only 13% in 2003. Silicone implants are also on the wane, from 31% in 1998 to just nine percent in 2003.

As with cataract surgery, only a small proportion of respondents performed refractive surgery at a high volume. Only 3% of respondents performed more than 300 refractive procedures per year, 12% performed 100 to 199 per year, and the vast majority (78%) performed less than 100 procedures per year. Among the respondents who practiced refractive surgery, all treated

myopia, 90% treated astigmatism, and 76% treated hyperopia.

The biggest leap, however, was for presbyopia procedures, up to 19% compared to eight percent in 2002 and just three percent in 1998 when the survey first started.

The French preference for using PRK to treat myopia was again confirmed, with 82% of respondents expressing a preference for that technique. LASIK however is slowly but surely making inroads into French practices, with 71% now using it for that indication, compared to just 31% back in 1998.

The use of LASIK for the treatment of astigmatism also remained steady. The procedure was used by two-thirds (66%) of respondents for that indication in 2003, compared to 62% in 2002.

PRK use continues to decline for treating astigmatism, down from 60% in 2002 to 56% last year, and considerably less than its 75% high in 1998.

Clear lensectomy is the third most widely practiced procedure for myopia, its use remaining stable between 1998 and 2003 at 33%. The Artisan anterior chamber IOL continues to grow in popularity with French ophthalmologists, with 14% implanting the devices in 2003 compared to less than one percent in 1998.

In contrast with its use in myopia, LASIK continues to outstrip PRK in the treatment of

hyperopia in France. More than half (57%) of the respondents used LASIK for treating hyperopia, while only 36% used PRK.

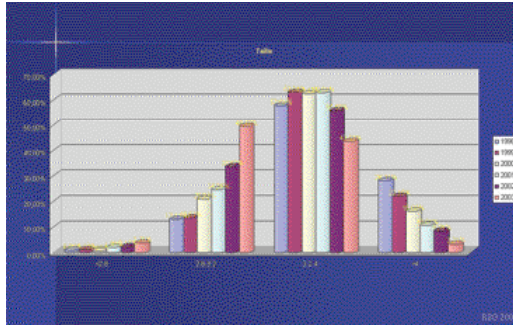
Phakic IOLs also gained in popularity as a treatment for hyperopia, with 12% of respondents implanting them in 2003, compared to only 4.4% in 1998 and nine percent in 2001.

For the treatment of presbyopia, nine percent of respondents expressed a preference for using IOLTECH's Newlife implant, the first time it has ever featured in the survey. LASIK (6.5%) and PRELEX (6.2%) were the next preferred techniques for treating presbyopia.

While the use of topographic systems has become almost universally accepted in France, with over 95% of respondents now using topography in their refractive procedures, the figure has declined slightly from last year's 99% figure. Dr Gold surmised that this was probably due to the increasing popularity of implants in refractive surgery, requiring less systematic use of topography.

Orbscan remains the most popular system for corneal mapping, used by almost one third (30%) of respondents ahead of EyeSys (21%) and TMS ((22%).

In microkeratome use, the Hansatome (57%) is still the most popular followed by the Moria Carriazo-Barraquer (35%). In terms of laser choice, two brand names, Technolas (47%) and Nidek (30%), continue to dominate the French market.

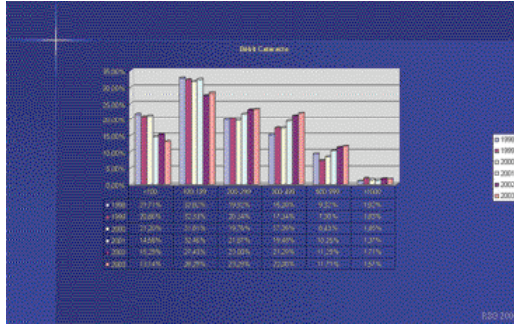


JOB Most respondents (92%) used clear corneal incisions. The size of the incisions used by French ophthalmic surgeons for cataract surgery has continued to decrease over the past few years.

SATISFACTION

Some of the more intriguing

cerned the demographic profile and job satisfaction rating of French ophthalmologists. He noted that the number of women



The proportion of French ophthalmologists with lower volumes of cataract surgery has continued to decline over the years surveyed, while the proportion with higher volumes has steadily increased.

findings of Dr Gold's survey con-

responding to the survey had

grown steadily over the years (26% in 1998 compared to 41% in 2003), reflecting the fact that ophthalmology was less and less the preserve of male physicians.

In terms of job satisfaction among ophthalmologists, when asked whether they would have become physicians if they had known what it would be like, 27% said they would not, a figure that has remained steady over the past seven years. One in twenty respondents (5%) said that they would choose another profession other than ophthalmology if they had the opportunity to go back and change their career path, up just slightly from 3.9% in 1998.

A new question this year concerned the amount of holidays taken by French ophthalmologists. The majority (61%) took between 30-60 days annual leave every year, one quarter (26%) took between 15-30 days, and only 3.5% took less than 15 days.

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