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PRESS RELEASE

CHANGING LIVES: CATARACT SURGERY MAKES A DIFFERENCE TO BLACKPOOL MAN'S LIFE.

THE life of a Blackpool pensioner has been significantly improved thanks to a simple procedure to rectify the leading cause of impaired vision throughout the world.

Prior to initial surgery on his eye in November 2009, Mr Herbert Sowerby's sight had deteriorated, affecting his day-to-day life severely, due to cataracts on both eyes affecting his vision.

Mr Sowerby, 80, from Blackpool said: "I had noticed a gradual difference in the clarity of my sight for some time, but I was in denial. It was only at the end of 2009, when it became difficult to drive because of blurred vision, that I knew something was seriously wrong and went to my GP who referred me to Victoria Hospital for treatment."

Cataracts form when the transparent natural lens of the eye, which focuses the image on the retina, becomes hazy. This hazy lens is called a cataract and when this haziness of the lens worsens it begins to affect the vision.

A cataract operation removes the hazy lens, replacing it with an artificial lens which refocuses light onto the retina resulting in clear vision.

Consultant Ophthalmologist, Mr Shreyas Raj said: "Cataract surgery is a very common surgical procedure and is one of the most frequently performed operations in the country.

"Nowadays it is rare to find people becoming completely blind as a result of cataract, especially in developing countries. However, the effect of cataracts on patients' lives can be quite significant. Having cataract surgery makes a big difference to lives of many patients."

The operation is performed by a technique known as phacoemulsification through a small keyhole incision. The cataract is broken down into small pieces using an ultrasound probe and then sucked out. An artificial lens implant is then inserted into the same position through the key hole incision.

Mr Raj added: "If you have cataracts on both eyes, like Mr Sowerby did, surgery will be performed on separate occasions to give the first eye time to heal and for normal vision to return.

"Once surgery for cataracts has been performed, about 95% of people will have normal vision and can return to normal activities within four to six weeks."

Mr Sowerby said: “After the first cataract was removed late last year, it immediately made an enormous difference to my vision. Since having my second cataract operation, I have noticed a significant change for the better, I can see fully out of both eyes for the first time in years. My life has returned to normal and I can now read as clearly in artificial light as I can in day light. I can also now drive again too.

“I have nothing but praise for my surgeon, Mr Raj, who did a superb job. I have him to thank for returning my sight!”



Above: Mr Herbert Sowerby

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