

Orthopaedic Connection

Orthopaedic Surgery and Ophthalmology?

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Sometimes it seems to me that there is an epidemic of falls. So many patients I see in the office or hospital have fallen and sustained significant injuries.

I have written articles about falls in the past, but this time it takes a more specific direction.

Orthopaedic Surgery and Ophthalmology might seem about as far apart as specialties can get. And in a lot of ways that is true. Can you picture me doing cataract surgery or an eye doctor doing a total hip? No way.

Visual Impairment

- Poor visual acuity
- Poor depth perception
- Visual field loss
- Affects postural balance

In short, poor vision makes you an accident waiting to happen. A fracture looms in your future.

Untreated cataracts are the visual impairment cause 49% of the time in hip fractures.

Many Causes of Falls

Obviously there are many causes of falls which I am not going to go into here, because this is only about vision.

A Large Study

There has been a huge study of thousands of Medicare patients to determine fracture occurrence in patients who did and did not have cataract surgery.

The statistics of a study this large are overwhelming, but there are important conclusions to come from it.

Results

There is a significant decrease in the rate of falls after cataract surgery when compared with falls before surgery.

Cataract surgery lowers the odds of having a hip fracture greatly.

The Message

There are many causes of visual impairment in patients such as diabetes, glaucoma and lots more.

In this article I am only considering cataracts. That's what the study was about. Nowadays, fortunately the treatment of cataracts has become commonplace in many hospitals.

Those patients whose cataracts are getting worse and the patient is putting off having surgery are at much greater risk of falling and fracturing their hip.

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It contains a world of musculoskeletal information you and your family and friends can use!

Website, Your Orthopaedic Connection, Archive of all previous GCH articles.

Please check it out. Be well.

Dr. Haverbush