

FROM: Skye
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SUBJECT: An Incredible Journey

Three years ago my husband had cataract surgery. He was told at that time that he had Fuchs' Corneal Dystrophy. He'd never heard of it before and he was 78 years old. He was told that the surgery could possibly accelerate the Fuchs' Corneal Dystrophy but it was 50/50. We really were told nothing else except that it was an inherited condition. He went ahead with the cataract surgery and it was not successful. His eyesight got much worse and the doctor said that he would have to have a corneal transplant. I read about corneal transplants and they sounded pretty scary, but his eyesight in the affected eye was now 20/200. Things went from bad to worse and in the next year he had four outbreaks of herpes or shingles in that eye. The doctor said that he couldn't have the transplant until he was herpes free for six months. During that period of time I woke up to the fact that I'd better start doing some research on all of this. By this time his sight had deteriorated to 20/400.

At a later date the doctor told us about a new operation that was a partial corneal transplant and was much less invasive with a much shorter recovery time and an excellent success record. He still was in the herpes recovery so we couldn't schedule any surgery and when I questioned the doctor as to how many of these new surgeries she had done, she said "none yet" but I have two scheduled. That didn't sound good to me. Then I found this group. My husband's eyesight was too bad for him to use the computer so I'm his voice here.

We decided to find another doctor but it was difficult because we're in an HMO. After much paperwork and many telephone calls he was sent to Dr. Sophie Deng at the Jules Stein Eye Clinic at UCLA where the HMO has a contract. Dr. Deng said that he was a good candidate for the surgery. However, the herpes had left one pretty bad scar on his eye. She never actually saw him with the herpes and from the way we described it and his symptoms (absolutely) no pain, she had her doubts that herpes is what he had. After the proper amount of time had passed he had the surgery. That was in January.

Dr. Deng was wonderful. Her entire team and staff were wonderful. The recovery was slower than usual because of the scar and possibly his age, now 81, but I'm thrilled to be able to tell you that yesterday he passed the vision test at the DMV in Los Angeles. And the rules here are among the most strict in the country. We're so thrilled and so indebted to all of you in this group for the amazing information you provide. And we hope that his journey through this process will

inspire others. He had a severe case. His corneal thickness numbers were off the chart, His vision was in the legally blind category. He had herpes and a bad scar. Even if he hadn't been able to pass the driver's test he would have still been thrilled with his new eyesight. That was a bonus. He can actually read the morning paper and isn't tied to a magnifying glass.

So hang in there. Keep going. And find a good doctor.

All our best.

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