CATARACT—Pre and Post Operative Nursing Care

BY

TRILOK SINGH

Christian Medical College Hospital, Ludhiana, Punjab.

Before considering the Pre and Post Operative Nursing Care of a patient with Cataract let us consider what Cataract is and its classification.

Cataract is an opacity of the lens which can be classified as under:

1. Congenital Cataract
2. Senile Cataract
3. Traumatic Cataract
4. Diabetic Cataract

There are also other types of cataract but the above mentioned are the important ones.

Stages of Cataract. There are three stages:

1. Immature
2. Mature
3. Hypermature

Nursing Care

In India much of the cataract surgery is still being carried out in Eye Camps. The patient's relatives usually carry out the nursing care. This does not mean that nursing care is not valuable or necessary in the field of Ophthalmic Surgery. There is a great lack of Ophthalmic Trained Nurses in our country. Nursing care of the eye is most necessary to keep the patients comfortable and to avoid post-operative complications, viz:

(a) Iris prolapse
(b) Hyphaema
(c) Infection

It will be understood that good nursing care is as necessary in this branch of surgery as in any other.

The patient should be admitted to hospital 24 hours before the operation. On admission the following tests, examinations and procedures should be carried out. Full explanation should be given to the patient concerning his treatment and the ways in which he can co-operate to make the operation a success.

1. Routine urine test
2. Blood pressure to be recorded
3. Dental examination
4. General physical examination
5. Culture from the eye to be taken (if doctor orders)
6. Cut eye lashes
7. Shave eye brows
8. Full bath to be taken including washing of the hair
9. Hospital clothing should be worn
10. Lacrymal syringing
11. Record Intra Ocular tension
12. Note any cough
13. Mild sedative is given to relieve tension.

Note. Only if all the above mentioned tests and examinations are normal can the patient be posted for surgery.

Pre-operative Nursing Care

1. Cataract surgery is usually carried out under local anaesthesia but some surgeons prefer general anaesthesia.
2. The pupil is dilated with homatropine drops 2%.
3. Instill antibiotic drops e.g. penicillin, streptomycin, chloromycetin 3 times after an interval of 10 minutes.
4. Thorough morning wash and mouth hygiene of the patient should be carried out.
5. The patient should be dressed in theatre clothes.
6. The patient may have a light breakfast if the operation is to be carried out under local anaesthesia.
7. Artificial teeth are removed in cases who are for general anaesthesia, otherwise they are not removed.

Preadmission

Preadmission should be given as ordered by the surgeon one hour before surgery. The patient is then transferred to the theatre together with the chart.

Duties of operation room sister or Staff Nurse

1. Check the patient and see whether the pupil is dilated or not, if not instil another drop of homatropine 2%.
2. Instil local anaesthesia drops 4 times as under:
   (a) Pencocaine 1%
   (b) Anesthesia 1/2–1% at 5 minutes interval.
3. Clean around the eye and face thoroughly with cetavlon 1%.

Surgery

Two types of surgery may be done.

(a) Intra Capsular Cataract Extraction (to remove the lens and its capsule).
(b) Extra Capsular Cataract Extraction (lens is removed but the capsule left behind—will be absorbed).

Intra Capsular Cataract Extraction is the method usually employed but for complicated cases Extra Capsular Cataract Extraction is usually carried out.

(Continued on page 90)