

My testimony

This story began in my early fifty, my eye doctor told me I will be almost blind in less than 10 years, I will not be able to run, bike, hike, ski (which for me mean 20 hours / week), drive my car, work as an emergency room doctor.

I was in shock for 2 months and began to be sad to the point I was diagnosed having a major depression. I started to contact the Braille Institute and see how I could live the rest of my life without suffering too much.

When I first met Dr Cohen he told me that my ophthalmologist who followed me for 12 years referred me very late in the evolution of this disease, and made no promises for the outcome at the beginning.

When I came back from Arizona (I go there every winter to train), I knew something wrong was going on I couldn't bike on flat more than 20 km/hour, got lost a few times in the desert because of my impaired vision, and also had a hard time to drive my car across town (Tucson is a small town). I failed the SAAQ exam for the eyes and lost my driver's license.

When I go to my appointment with Dr Cohen he tells me "we will try the surgery, I am reasonably confident to help you" he said.

During the surgery, I could feel that Dr Cohen was in full control of the situation even if I made a few mistakes during the surgery he never lost his temper or became impatient and would always encourage me and remain calm. He was always very nice to me.

Being a doctor myself I realize real quick that the success of this surgery relied on several things: the trust in him, the more calm I was, in the mood I was in and of course the skill of the surgeon.

Frankly it was easy to relax because I felt that Dr Cohen was calm and in total control of the procedure and very friendly with the nurses and all the staff in the operating room. I could also listen to good music.

The surgery was a success I didn't feel any pain, a month after I recover almost a normal left vision and a very acceptable one on my right eye. I can now work as a doctor, compete again as a cyclist and have a very great time contemplating beautiful scenery as sunset, animals in the forest, flowers and most of all see my daughter and grandchildren grow up and admire my girlfriend (she is very pretty...). During summer 2010 I won the Olympic duathlon in Montreal.

Deep in my heart I know I was very lucky to have met Dr Cohen.

My message for all the optometrists and ophthalmologists is to refer as soon as possible anyone who has abnormal eye pressure or abnormal optic nerve and at an early stage to a glaucoma specialist.

For the public get your eyes tested while you are young adult for glaucoma, it is an insidious disease that will develop over many years that you will ignore but will destroy your optic nerve. The consequences you may go blind.

The prevention test is very simple painless without complication done in less than 10 minutes. It is only to take your eye pressure and look your optic nerve with a light. This will prevent early glaucoma to develop and worsened to the point of getting blind.

Think about this one: this surgery can cure and trust me for most of us doctors “a patient is cured” rarely exists.

JPL medicine doctor, cyclist, father and grand father very happy to see again.