

# Hospital's pioneering eye surgery on TV news

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A local hospital which pioneered ground-breaking treatment for glaucoma featured on BBC TV South last week.

The Queen Victoria Hospital (QVH) is using the latest worldwide developments in glaucoma surgery to help fight against the second biggest cause of irreversible blindness in the UK.

A hospital spokesman described how Mr Gokulan Ratnarajan performed surgery and was interviewed by Mark Norman from South Today.

She said glaucoma is an eye condition where the optic nerve is damaged by the pressure of fluid inside the eye. While drops can prevent glaucoma causing sight loss, there's no treatment to restore sight when it has gone.

She said: "About 500,000 people in the UK are said to have the condition, with numbers rising significantly as the population ages. Glaucoma becomes more common as you get older. It is the leading cause of irreversible blindness in the world. The main risk factor is high eye pressure inside the eye."

She explained glaucoma is asymptomatic in early

stages so many patients do not actually know they have it until it is quite advanced. It is termed the 'silent thief of sight.'

"Treatment used to be mainly drops and surgery reserved for advanced disease as it was relatively risky and unpredictable. However newer surgeries called Minimally Invasive glaucoma surgery (MIGS) in which we specialise at QVH means safer surgery and it is often combined with cataract surgery, ie. the patient would be having a cataract surgery anyway and at the same time we can do the MIGS."

QVH is the UK's only centre combining MIGS surgery and the use of a laser so it will target both the inflow or fluid production in the eye as well as the outflow, this is novel and hopefully means more lowering of eye pressure, preventing glaucoma getting worse and getting patients off some/all their eye drops that they generally dislike.

Glaucoma affects people's quality of life because risk of blindness or actually being blind by the disease, affects their ability to drive and sufferers must inform the DVLA if they have glaucoma in both eyes. Eye drops sometimes have to be administered three times a day. The hospital wants to raise awareness of the condition which is often only detected during routine eye tests.



Surgeon Mr Gokulan Ratnarajan and Mark Norman from South Today