

Surgical Tool Reduces The Effects Of Glaucoma

University of California, Irvine (UC Irvine)



Glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness in the world, according to the World Health Organization. The disease occurs when the clear fluid in the eye does not drain properly through the trabecular meshwork, an area of spongy tissue near the base of the cornea. The poor drainage increases the internal pressure in the eye, which damages the optic nerve and causes progressive, irreversible vision loss over time.

In 2002 George Baerveldt, M.D., a professor at the University of California Irvine's department of ophthalmology, invented a new surgical tool and method for treating glaucoma. This procedure allows surgeons to remove the clogged tissue, restoring access to the natural drainage pathways in the eye. Funding was provided by NeoMedix through a Small Business Innovation Research Grant from the National Eye Institute of the National Institutes of Health.

This technique is minimally invasive (only one clear corneal incision is required), relatively easy to perform, and can be combined with other surgical procedures, such as cataract removal. Studies have shown a 91 percent success rate in reducing pressure on the optic nerve.

“ *Because of its excellent safety profile in both intra-operative and postoperative settings the Food and Drug Administration approved the procedure for open-angle glaucoma, a common form of the disease.*

The technology was patented in 2005 and licensed to California-based NeoMedix, which manufactures and markets the product as Trabectome. The tool and procedure is currently being used in eyecare centers around the United States.

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