With Dr. Francis Price, Jr.

Q. There have been discussions with cornea specialists about a lattice dystrophy laser procedure that is new. You have had, and TJ has had, multiple transplants. Every time in a white room, you get to use a laser to make a small hole in your eye and that’s a big deal on my eye and it’s very painful. Can you tell me more about this condition and what to expect at it gets older?

Lattice dystrophy, like a number of other corneal stromal dystrophies, often starts with recurring corneal erosions that affect the surface of the eye, usually at the age of 20. They are a result of a fibrous lattice that is formed in the lattice layer of the cornea. Lattice dystrophy typically affects men more than women and it is one of the most common corneal dystrophies affecting the corneal surface. It is caused by a genetic defect in the corneal collagen fibres that make up the lattice layer of the cornea, leading to recurrent erosions that can result in reduced vision and discomfort.

A.

To summarize the episodes of our communication, we were unable to send your email address to Dr. Elizabeth Lawlor, a cornea specialist, at her office located in Indianapolis.

Dr. Price Performed Same Day Transplants on Father and Son

The Vietnam War was raging and young Michael (“Mike”) Roberts had just gone through Air Force Basic Camp in 1965 with his sights set on becoming a military pilot and express weather. Before being assigned to his next station, he was sent for an eye exam and was found to be legally blind. The opthalmologist took one look and exclaimed, “Boy, just had two corneas in the Air Force! You have keratoconus.”

He was given a medical discharge and returned home to Galen, Michigan, where his brother Dr. Eugene Benedict, an optometrist who had performed a cornea transplant in the early 1960s to extend the sight of a fellow optometrist, and his friend Dr. Francis Price, performed a transplant surgery that restored his vision.

Happy Endings are Anticipated

Both Mike and TJ are doing well, TJ’s sight immediately improved after surgery while Mike’s full improvement will take about a year or so but he is very grateful for the surgery. Mike’s discharge was from the Air Force in 1968 after he was found eligible for cross-linking surgery.

A remarkable number of instances occurred since that shared surgery date.

Mike is the father of the patient for whom this surgery was performed.

Dr. Price will treat the patient for one or more cornea transplants.

The treatment for keratoconus that many people with lattice dystrophy will require multiple transplants of each eye over a lifetime.

Darker & Son: Michael Roberts and Timothy Roberts

Footnote: While Mike and TJ’s keratoconus had progressed too far for participation in the cornea transplants for this report, in March of 2008, they were interviewed for information about their participation in the cornea transplant study. Dr. Price mentioned that they both were very pleased with the outcome of the surgery.

Princeton, Westfield, and Millburn, New Jersey

In March of 2006, the patients’ father, Dr. Eugene Benedict, and the students at the New England Eye Bank in Boston, Massachusetts, performed a cornea transplant.

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Dr. Price has performed over 2,000 cornea transplants since 1989. He believes that cornea transplants are a service that should be available to all who are willing to receive it.

TJ is the first patient to receive a laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis (LASIK) procedure.

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College Intern in Second Year of Service To Our Mission

State Ball Education Major Aims for Career in Teaching

New Associate Joins Dr. Francis Price Specialist in Immunology and Corneal Conditions

How We’re Having an Impact With Your Support, Dr. Price