

# A Study of Patients Attending for Eye Surgery at a Rural Hospital in the Republic of Benin

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Over a 14-week period from 27 June–4 October 2000 all patients discharged from our eye unit after surgery were asked to complete a verbally administered questionnaire.

The St Jean de Dieu Hospital is situated 15 km north of Parakou, the major town in northern Benin (pop. 100,000+). The eye unit is staffed by one expatriate surgeon, three national nurses and one clerk.

One hundred and fifty-six questionnaires were completed. The age range of patients was from 2-90 years. Ninety-nine (63.5%) were over 65 years. Ninety-two were male, 64 were female (male:female 1.4:1)

### Distance Travelled and Means of Transport

- 14% travelled less than 20 km
- 20% travelled 20-100 km
- 66% travelled over 100 km.

The means of transport used were:

- Car taxi (communal) 72%
- Motorbike taxi 10%

- Train 6.7%
- Personal/family car 5%
- Family motorbike 4.5%
- Other car 1.9%.

### Pathology

Of the 156 patients, 66% were operated for cataract and 16% for glaucoma. Other pathology included pterygium (4) and entropion (3). When asked how many understood their pathology, 60% said they did not.

### Occupation

The patients' occupations were: 37% housewives (who usually work just as hard in the fields, as do their husbands); 29% subsistence farmers and 10% cattle herders. Six were children under 15 years (only one of whom attended school) and five patients were officially retired and in receipt of a pension.

### Publicity (Table 1)

### Cost of Surgery

We asked each patient who had paid the cost of their operation: 42% were self-financed; 38.5% were paid by patient's children; 9% were paid by a parent and a further 9% by the patient's wider family. The vast majority (98.7%) did not consider the consultation cost (US\$2) too expensive. The price of surgery was acceptable to 95.5% (US\$28 for cataract surgery with either an implant or aphakic spectacles).

### Emotions (Table 2)

On discharge from the hospital, usually 7 days after their operation, 135 (86.5%) said that

their vision had improved, 17 (11%) said it was worse. Each patient was asked if they experienced too much pain either during or after the operation. Whilst 131 (84%) did not experience too much pain, 23 (15%) did. Two patients made no comment.

### Evaluation (Table 3)

### General Comments

Finally, patients were asked for any additional comments. Sixty-seven patients volunteered 80 comments

- Satisfaction (18)
- Wished for a better result (16)
- Thankful to staff (7)
- Need for hospital to be cleaner (4)
- Experienced too much pain (3)
- Will pray for the staff (3)
- Will tell others to come (3)
- Other comments (26).

*Note: The eye service at St Jean de Dieu Hospital is supported by Christian Blind Mission International.*

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**Table 1: How Patients Knew About the Eye Clinic**

How informed?	No. (%)
Another patient	54 (34.5)
Outreach clinic	46 (29.5)
Radio	35 (22.5)
Family	7 (4.5)
Friends	6 (3.8)
Other	8 (5.1)

**Table 2: Emotions Experienced by Hospital Patients**

Emotions	No. (%)
Confidence in the doctor	27 (17.3)
Fear	26 (16.6)
Uncertainty	24 (15.4)
Confusion	9 (5.8)
Confidence	6
Confidence in God	2
Satisfaction	1

**Table 3: Evaluation by Patients of Their Stay in Hospital**

	Satisfactory	Fair	Unsatisfactory
Check-in desk	156	0	0
Nurse	153	1	2
Doctor	131	19	6
Consultation	152	1	3
Operation	129	20	6
Post-operative care	152	1	3

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