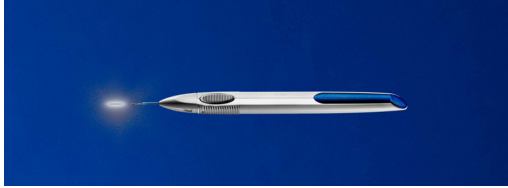


December 16, 2009

For Immediate Release

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Honolulu, Hawaii – Retinal vein occlusion (RVO) is the second leading cause of blindness after diabetic retinopathy. There are more than 150,000 new cases of RVO diagnosed each year in the United States. Symptoms of vision loss related to RVO can be mild: blurred vision to more severe/noticeable, like a black curtain obstructing part of the normal field of vision.

Today, Dr. James C. Lai, of Retina Consultants of Hawaii (RCH), was the first in Hawaii to use Ozurdex™, a revolutionary treatment for vein occlusion patients. This new treatment was just recently approved by the FDA. Prior to today, the only patients that had access to this medication in Hawaii were the ones enrolled in the clinical trials being led by Dr. Lai.

Retinal vein occlusion (RVO) is a blockage of a main vein in the back of eye. It is similar to a hair clog in a drain. In the back of the eye, valuable nutrients are not delivered to the rest of the retina because the clot prevents the blood from flowing normally. This blockage can lead to swelling and bleeding in the retina which can cause the more noticeable and severe vision loss. Ozurdex™ works specifically to decrease the swelling in the retina so that the patient's eye has a better chance at recovering more of their vision.

Developed by the drug company Allergan (Irvine, CA), Ozurdex™ is the first biodegradable, steroid implant that allows for a slow-release of the drug dexamethasone. During an in-office procedure, a flexible pellet is placed into the vitreous cavity of the eye. Slowly over time, the pellet of medication dissolves and releases the medication directly where it is needed. This slow-release treatment allows for consistent delivery of medication that works over an extended period of time, this allows for less frequent doctor's visits and less frequent injections.



Dr. Lai is very excited and confident of this meaningful advancement in treating RVO. "We have been involved in the clinical trials for this novel technology over the past 2 years," says Dr. Lai, "and we saw up to 30% of patients gain three lines of vision." This added experience with the Ozurdex™ treatment prepares Dr. Lai for the additional nuances to using this medication and helps him determine the best way to use this medication in each of his patients. "RVO is not the same in each patient, and each patient may respond to the medication in a slightly different way. The added experience helps me determine the best way to manage each unique patient."

Dr. Lai is a clinical trial investigator at The Retina Center at Pali Momi, affiliate of Kapi'olani Medical Center at Pali Momi and sees his regular patients at his private practice, Retina Consultants of Hawaii, which he shares with Gregg T. Kokame, MD. The Retina Center at Pali Momi was also the first to bring Lucentis™ to Hawaii, three years before FDA approval, for the treatment of wet-macular degeneration. "Prior to Lucentis™, the best treatments we could use for our patients would only stabilize their degenerating vision," says Dr. Lai "Gregg and I strive to bring the newest and most comprehensive array of treatments to our patients. The Ozurdex™ treatment for RVO is an example of our commitment to achieving 'excellence through compassionate clinical care and state of the art research.'"

