

# Glaucoma Study Solid, Says FP Doc

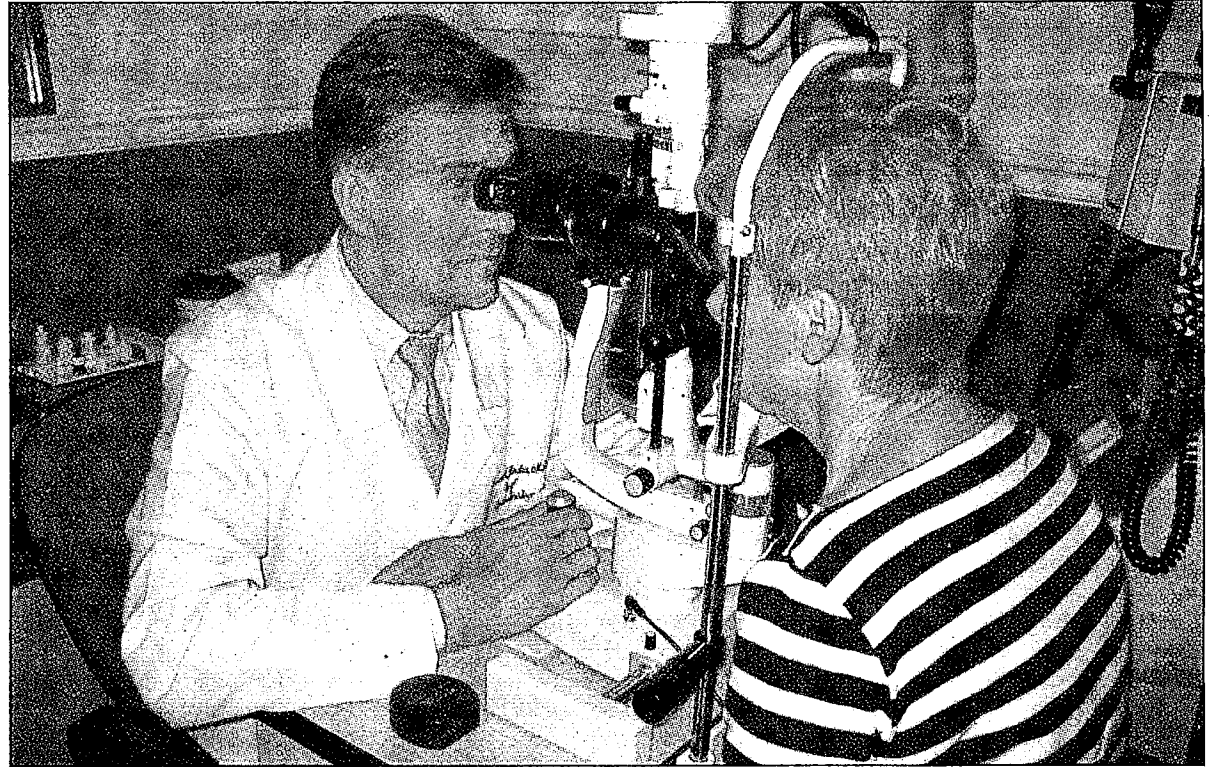
BY FLORAL PARK DISPATCH STAFF  
FLORALPARK@ANTONNEWS.COM

A "cold" laser to treat glaucoma is safe and the treatment is long-lasting, according to a new study by Lawrence F. Jindra, M.D., a Floral Park ophthalmologist. For many people, the procedure eliminates the need for daily prescription eye drops. Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness, as people can go for years without symptoms, and by the time they begin to notice changes in their vision, irreversible damage has occurred.

"Early detection is the key to saving sight," says Dr. Jindra, chief emeritus of the division of ophthalmology at Winthrop University-Hospital. "Once people are diagnosed, treatment options include prescription eye drops or laser treatment."

Jindra's study, based on 10-year follow-up data, found that the Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT) is a safe and effective first-line treatment for glaucoma with a lasting effect. He presented his research earlier this year at the Annual Scientific Symposium of the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery.

SLT was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2001. "The laser treatment takes only a few minutes in the doctor's office and causes little to no discomfort, nor side effects to speak of. It is covered by Medicare and most insurance plans," Dr. Jindra said. "Although prescription eye drops are also effective in controlling



glaucoma, patients must remember to use them every day for the rest of their lives. The medications may cause side effects and can be costly. Studies show that up to 40 percent of patients do not use the eye drops as prescribed."

The study found that the SLT laser proved to be successful long-term in significantly lowering pressure inside the eye, the goal in treating glaucoma. In an analysis of almost 2,000 eyes treated with SLT as the primary therapy, the cumulative probability of

success at 10 years was 90 percent.

In the most common form of glaucoma, the drainage system in the eye fails to function properly. "If you compare the eye to a sink, it's like having a clogged drain," Jindra explains. "Fluid cannot leave the eye as quickly as it is produced, causing it to back up, and this leads to increased pressure in the eye." If the pressure is not controlled, it can damage the optic nerve and cause permanent and irreparable vision loss.

Lawrence F. Jindra working with a patient.

"In this day and age, it's a tragedy for anyone to experience vision loss or go blind because of glaucoma," Jindra says. "Regular eye exams, timely diagnosis, and early and effective treatment are the best ways to preserve one's precious sight, especially if someone has risk factors for the disease."

For more information about glaucoma, visit [www.jindramd.com](http://www.jindramd.com).