

Dynamic Eye Surgeon with Passion for Teaching & Research to Eliminate Preventable Blindness from India



Dr. Suresh K Pandey

Director, SuVi Eye Institute &
Lasik Laser Center

Secretary, Indian Medical Association (IMA)
Kota, Rajasthan, India

“I am a self-made man and I rose from very humble beginnings to receive the best possible Ophthalmic Surgical training in India and overseas, and I am happy I could come back to my own area and people and do good work among my own people. I want to encourage and inspire young doctors to come back to their roots and provide good services in areas, where they are needed and valued.”

Tell us about your self, your family background & early schooling?

I was born in August, 1968 in a small village Mohna, Chittorgarh (a land of braver and sacrifice) (Rajasthan) in a family of modest means among four brothers and sisters. My father (Shri Kameshwar Prasad Pandey) was a school teacher, and my mother (Smt. Maya Pandey) was a housewife.

I was fortunate to have a remarkable man as my grandfather (Dr. Kamta Prasad Pandey), who learned some ophthalmology skills from a British ophthalmologist with whom he had worked. My childhood was a struggle for various reasons. We were a big family in a small house, and there were many family problems.

We did not even have an electricity connection and I would wake up early morning to study and then study till dusk. As a result of all the hard work, I did well in the Primary school and was given a government scholarship. This was a big boost for my confidence and I then went to the adjoining town of Rawatbhata (a town of atomic power fame) to study in the senior secondary school and passed examination with first rank in the entire district. I then moved to Rampura (Mandsaur, MP) for studying B.Sc. Part I and got first rank in Vikram University, Ujjain in 1985. I prepared for medical entrance exams by borrowing notes and books from school friends.

My hard work and perseverance help me to clear pre-medical test and to secure admission in the MBBS course in Netaji Subhash Chandra Medical College, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh in my first attempt. There was neither much guidance available nor did he have the resources/access to any kind of coaching. It was due to dedicated effort and self-discipline that was responsible for this success.

Tell us about your professional journey since inception ?

I finished my medical studies (MBBS course) from Netaji Subhash Chandra Medical College, Jabalpur (MP) and it was during MBBS that I came into my own. I initially faced a lot of language problem as I had studied in Hindi medium, and here the medium was all English. But I overcame this barrier, and while I just passed the first Professional MBBS exam due to various problems, I managed to be in the top 20 students in the second Professional Exam, and managed to secure the 7th rank in the Sate Pre PG entrance exam. I took ophthalmology in the same medical college, but soon felt that I wanted to pursue Ophthalmology Residency from India's one of the top medical colleges. I appeared in the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education & Research (PGIMER Chandigarh) PG entrance test and managed to secure Ophthalmology residency in PGIMER.

After finishing my fellowship, I came back with my wife (Dr. Vidushi Sharma, MD, AIIMS, FCRSEdin also an ophthalmologist) to India. Initially, we had toyed with the idea of working in the prestigious L.V. Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad, and had been in constant touch with the top faculty at the Institute during our fellowship. However, when it was finally time to come back, I had an urge to come back to my own area, and do good quality work in my own practice. So, we landed in Kota (Education City), Rajasthan with big dreams and little funding. We set up the SuVi (Suresh & Vidushi) Eye Institute & Lasik Laser Center in a modest set-up, but had our hands full with work within a few months. Soon, we constructed our own hospital, acquired all the latest equipments in the field of Ophthalmic care, and also created space for other ophthalmic colleagues to join our hospital.

You have achieved many awards & gold Medal in the field of cataract surgery, Please shed some light on latest advancement on cataract surgery done by you & your team?

Dr. Vidushi & myself have also done other pioneering work in cataract surgery, related to performing phacoemulsification surgery & multifocal IOL implantation in patients with postural problems performed at SuVi Eye Institute & Lasik Laser Center, Kota, Rajasthan, India. We have popularized technique of Piggyback IOL (of multifocal & toric IOLs) technique to correct extremely high refractive errors and to provide the advantages of toric and multifocal IOLs to these patients (video link- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOBNqOTou7s>). The video describing this piggyback technique, made completely in-house in Kota, won the Best Cataract Surgery Video International Award during APACRS Annual Conference in Shanghai, China.

My passion for cataract research, live surgery and sharing surgical pearls for managing complex cataract IOL cases resulted in prestigious "Achievement Award" during the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Best-Of-Show-Video Award during the AAO, ASCRS, ESCRS, APACRS international ophthalmology conferences.

Some of the other innovations in the field of cataract surgery include cataract surgery in infants, cataract surgery without preoperative dilating eye drops, non-dominant hand cataract surgery, how to achieve clear cornea on day 1 after phacoemulsification surgery. Many ophthalmologists from India and overseas visited SuVi Eye Institute, Kota to learn and fine-tune cataract surgery skills. I have also opportunity to implant India's first Tecnis multifocal toric IOL, and North India's first Symphony Toric IOL.

Tell us about Lasik laser surgery and bladeless Lasik surgery?

LASIK is the most popular elective procedure in the world for correction of refractive error. In today's world of active lifestyles and increasing cosmetic desires, many people find wearing glasses and contact lenses a big hassle. Many common activities like playing sports, swimming, driving etc. become difficult and pursuing a career in armed forces, police, aviation industry, modeling etc. become extremely difficult if not impossible. LASIK (an acronym for the medical term laser assisted in-situ keratomileusis) offers the opportunity to get freedom from glasses and contacts, so that you can live an active and free life like never before.

The Bladeless LASIK option utilizes a precise, high-energy femtosecond laser instead of a microkeratome blade to create the flap of corneal tissue. Since being invented in the 1990s, the femtosecond laser has been incredibly successful. This laser continues to provide LASIK patients and their eye doctors with a bladeless alternative to traditional laser eye surgery.

Cataract is the one of the major cause of blindness

in the world, What is your message to patients or what is your take on this?

Age related cataract remains the commonest cause of blindness. At present, surgery is the only way to manage cataract. Fortunately, cataract surgery (with intraocular lens implantation-IOL) is one of the most successful surgeries, and it is a tragedy that despite a simple surgery, there are still so many people blind due to cataracts specially in remote part of country. The reasons are manifold, including non-availability of free or highly subsidized medical services where they are most needed, and increasing cost of the now more popular phacoemulsification surgery with premium IOLs. Unfortunately, cataracts can also affect children, and this is a bigger challenge, as childhood cataract is more difficult to manage, and is often associated with other problems.

Cataract has been addressed in a big way through various National Programs, including the National Program for Control of Blindness (NPCB) in India, and there is a strong established tradition of charity in organizing cataract surgery camps in various parts of the country. The need of the hour is to improve on the quality of surgery being performed in these eye camps, and to ensure that the all too common complication/ sequelae of posterior capsule opacification which often occurs after cataract surgery is also addressed.

While newly available cataract surgery techniques (for example femto-second laser assisted cataract surgery) and refinements are what constitute progress, we must realize that in a country like India (with huge cataract backlog), we need to strike a balance between new techniques and the economics of health care.

I would also like to emphasize to the patients that they should not wait for particular (e.g. winter) season to get their cataract surgery done. Also, there is a myth that cataracts need to "ripen" before surgery. Cataract surgery is the only remedy to manage cataracts (as of today) and the patients should not wait for a prolonged time as then complications may ensue that hamper the visual results. Last but not the least there is good news about on-going latest research on use of Lanosterol eye drop to reverse lenticular opacity. If use of lanosterol is successful this can help our cataract cases without the need of surgery.

