

# Cataract surgery during the COVID-19 pandemic in a major inner London hospital

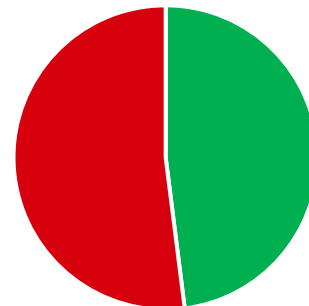
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**Introduction:** COVID-19 has caused a massive disruption on the delivery of cataract surgery as part of efforts to free up capacity to support intensive care provision.

**Objectives:** To explore the impact COVID-19 on the service delivery and outcomes of cataract surgery in a major London hospital significantly impacted by COVID-19.

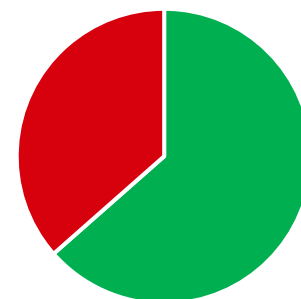
**Methods:** Demographic, preoperative, intraoperative and postoperative parameters of patients undergoing cataract surgery during the pandemic sample period and a similar sample of pre-pandemic period were extracted and compared. The pandemic sample period was defined as starting from the first stay-at-home order announced by the Prime Minister and the most recent relaxation of the stay-at-home order.

Pandemic period



- No ocular co-pathologies
- ≥1 ocular co-pathologies

Pre-pandemic period



- No ocular co-pathologies
- ≥1 ocular co-pathologies

**Results:** During the pandemic period, 252 operations were performed with 3 cancellations, compared to 463 operations and 1 cancellation pre-pandemic. Median age in both periods were similar (69 years). The proportion of male/female patients, left/right and first/second operated eye, and diabetic patients did not differ significantly ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, the proportion of eyes with  $\geq 1$  ocular co-pathologies operated during the pandemic period (52.0%) were significantly higher than the pre-pandemic period (36.5%) ( $p < 0.001$ ). Despite this, intraoperative and postoperative complication rates did not differ significantly ( $p > 0.05$ ), including PCR ( $p = 0.211$ ) and visual acuity loss rate ( $p = 0.897$ ).

**Conclusions:** COVID-19 has impacted the number of cataract operations performed as elective procedures were cancelled during the first lockdown. During subsequent restrictions, health services were allowed to operate. More severe cases were prioritised for cataract surgery, seen by the increased proportion of operated patients with ocular co-pathologies during the pandemic period.



	Pandemic period	Pre-pandemic period
Total operations	252	463
Total cancellations	3	1

Zoom contact details: <https://tinyurl.com/JHZoomlink>