REMOVAL OF ELSCHNIG'S PEARLS*

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After extracapsular cataract extraction Elschnig's pearls rarely develop in sufficient quantity to interfere seriously with vision. The following case illustrates such a complication, together with a simple but effective method of treatment.

Case Report

A man aged 25 years was recently referred to Moorfields Eye Hospital (High Holborn) because of blurred vision. In 1951 bilateral lamellar cataracts had been needled in another country. The visual acuity in both eyes subsequently improved, but by 1956 was beginning to blur again, and when the patient was seen at Moorfields it was reduced to hand movements. In each eye the pupillary region was found to be occluded by a mass of Elschnig's pearls which were proliferating forwards into the anterior chamber.

He was therefore admitted to hospital and the Elschnig's pearls in the left eye were washed out through a keratome incision after mobilization with an iris repositor. No difficulties were encountered at operation, and within a few days the visual acuity could be improved to 6/5 and N.5.

FIGURE.—Elschnig's pearls before and after anterior chamber irrigation.

The visual improvement was so dramatic that a similar operation was performed on the right eye (Figure). In this case, the Elschnig's pearls were easily removed by irrigation alone, no iris repositor being introduced. The result was similar, and with contact lenses the visual acuity improved to 6/4 in each eye.

I wish to thank Mr. S. J. H. Miller for his permission to publish this case, and Mr. T. Tarrant of the Medical Illustration Department, Institute of Ophthalmology for the illustrations.

* Received for publication January 26, 1959.