

When hope is greater than fear

Apart from a few vague outlines Rosalia (name changed) could hardly see anything. Since her childhood the now 27-year-old suffered from a lens opacity that had formed while she was in her mother's womb (see above picture).

That was the reason why she had her first cataract operation when she was six years old. This was performed as part of a so-called medical campaign - i.e. performed by visiting doctors - in a regional hospital in Cusco. But instead of making things better it made things worse. A few bits of the lens got stuck to the pupil and the implanted artificial lens. Thus a film of connective tissue had formed that let no light through. She was treated for weeks on end, suffered excruciating pain and was afraid. Finally she lost her former eyesight - a terrible experience for such a young girl - which led her to mistrust any further medical measures.

The trauma that she experienced was Rosalia's constant companion for the next two decades. Despite being nearly blind she could not bring up the courage for a second operation. Yet, with this disability she finished school, married, bore two gorgeous children, whom she, however, could never really see properly.

One day an acquaintance of hers told her about the missionary hospital in Curahuasi where foreign doctors provided professional treatment. Rosalia embarked on her journey - without an appointment, but with hope that here she might receive help. Her hope of healing was stronger than her fear of experiencing a second operative catastrophe with her remaining eye.

Finally, face to face with ophthalmologist Dr Werner Keßler, she calmly and collectedly told him her whole story. He encouraged her by telling her about the possibility of healing, if she underwent a routine operation. Upon hearing that she could be helped tears flowed down her cheeks; tears of relief after 21 years of blindness.

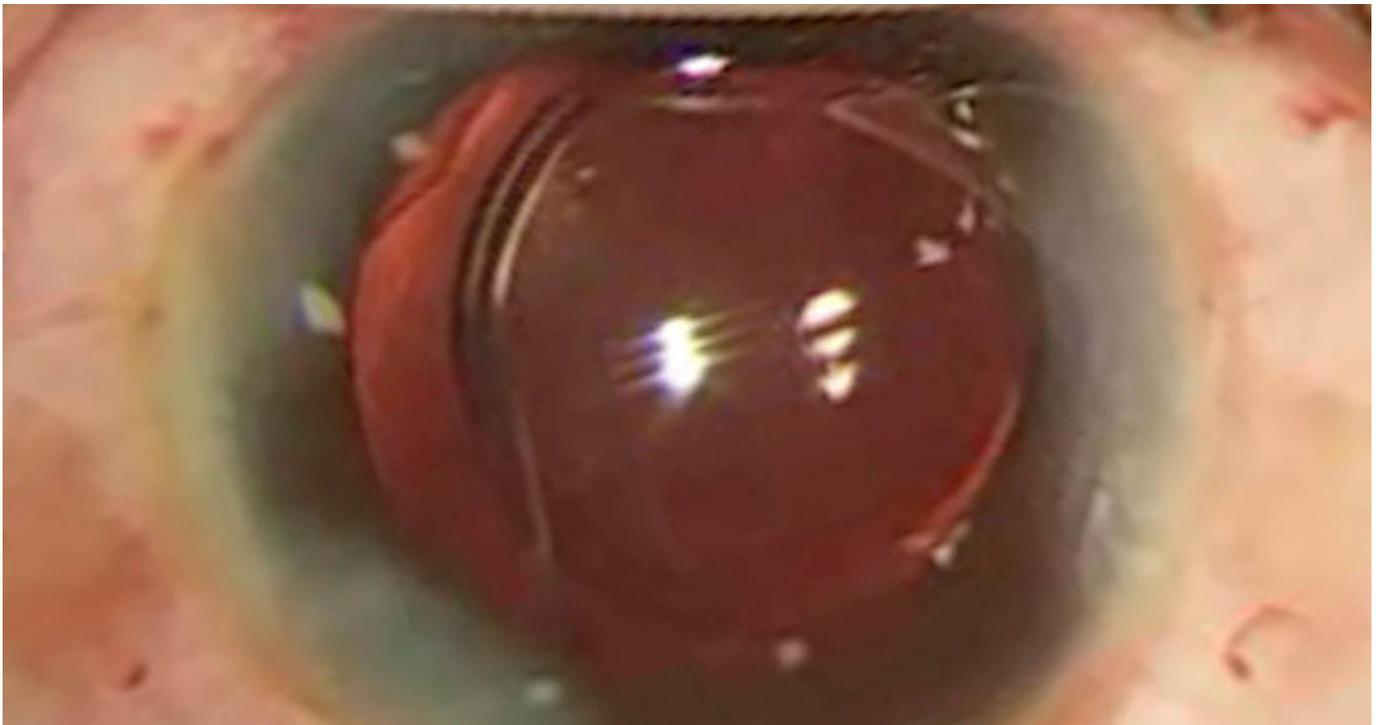
Then the day came. As is his wont the eye-doctor said a prayer before starting the operation that went as planned and was a success.

Already the day after the operation the patient had regained 2/3 of her possible eyesight. Rosalia felt huge joy and relief because of the quick operating success and the immediate restoration of her eyesight. It was the

first time that she could clearly see Dr Keßler, her husband and also her two children. It was a moment she will never forget for the rest of her life.



Full concentration during the operation. This photo captures how the hard lens nucleus is being sucked away via ultrasound.



At the end of the operation: the clear artificial lens is in the right place and the patient can see again.



The thankful patient (centre).

