

Fortec Medical Can Help Make Laser Cataract Surgery Profitable

BY GLENN N. POMERANCE, MD



Two years ago, some of my patients began asking me about laser cataract surgery. At that time, I did not see a way for a practice the size of mine, doing less than 800 cataract surgeries per year, to support the purchase of a device to perform this surgery. Fortunately, Fortec Medical was beginning to mobilize the CATALYS Precision Laser System (Abbott Medical Optics [AMO]), which provided an undeniable opportunity for me to bring this technology to my patients.

ADVANTAGES OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

With Fortec Medical, the high acquisition costs for a femtosecond laser are eliminated, so your procedures are profitable immediately. By having to pay only a per-procedure fee versus a capital purchase of a laser, associated monthly maintenance costs, and inventory, the fee charged to the patient can also be more reasonable. It is great for a practice like mine, where there are about 65 cataract procedures a month, of which 20 are laser cataract surgery. I usually have six to 10 patients scheduled for surgery on the day Fortec Medical delivers the CATALYS Precision Laser System.

The delivery and take away of the laser system are very fast and simple. I have a room in the ASC where I do my laser cataract procedures and my laser vision correction procedures, and not all the devices fit in the same room at the same time. It is wonderful to have the CATALYS System come and go, because it optimizes my ability to switch from one technology to another for different purposes.

The interface of the machine is so intuitive that I felt comfortable after performing the first case. For me, the learning curve was zero. It was a big confidence builder for me to be able to access the technology, which I never thought I could, and then to master the technology, which I wondered if I would. The Fortec Medical technicians are extremely professional and efficient. I have worked with four different technicians, and they have all been highly skilled, patient, and friendly. Their presence obviates the need to have trained laser personnel on your staff. I have never had a machine failure, and I attribute that to Fortec Medical's excellent management team. The experience of the technicians gives confidence to the surgeon who is not initially familiar with the technology.

A PRECISE PROCEDURE

I am into our second year of performing procedures with the CATALYS Precision Laser System, and I am so confident with the

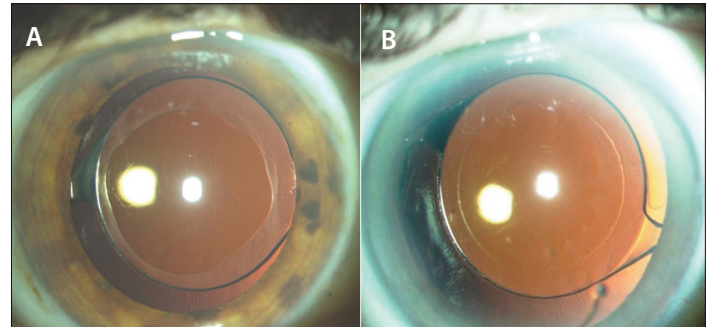


Figure. Manual capsulorhexis after 1 month (A). CATALYS capsulotomy after 1 month (B).

procedure and with the technology that I am convinced it is a safer and more accurate procedure than standard phacoemulsification. I can discuss the benefits more confidently with my patients. I adapted an existing nomogram for intrastromal astigmatism correction and find it accurate and repeatable. Patients love it. The astigmatism procedure takes about 2 seconds and the incisions, like everything the CATALYS Precision Laser System does, look perfect.

I have read the literature about potential complications of laser cataract surgery, among which are inadvertent puncture of the posterior capsule or an incomplete or jagged capsulorhexis. The safety profile of the CATALYS is strong and the safety zones clearly delineated, so none of these have been encountered in my practice.

Laser cataract surgery is much more precise than the manual technique (Figure). The laser is able to reproduce identical capsulorhexes time and again. That is the difference between a manual procedure and laser cataract surgery. It delivers accurate, reproducible outcomes every time, clear corneas on day one and a perfectly round, centered capsulorhexis.

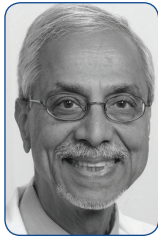
The best news is that performing laser cataract surgery on the CATALYS System through Fortec Medical does not place a financial burden on my bank account, provides my patients with up-to-date technology and assures my patients get a lot of value for the money they pay. ■

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Fortec Medical Allows Surgeons to Keep Up With Technology

BY RAJ SEETHARAMAN, MD



I started using the CATALYS Precision Laser System (Abbott Medical Optics) about a year ago, thanks to the mobile option through Fortec Medical. I always want to have the best equipment available, so the decision came easily to lease

the CATALYS Precision Laser System instead of investing in expensive new technology. I strongly believe that providers should not buy expensive equipment, because all technology is subject to rapid obsolescence. Any company that is in the business of renting technology is likely to obtain the newest and best technology as it becomes available, and Fortec Medical does just that.

IMPROVING CATARACT SURGERY

There are many reasons why laser cataract surgery is better than the manual procedure. The first reason relates to patients with dense cataracts. The femtosecond laser partially softens the cataract, so I am able to crack the nucleus and remove it with far less chance of complications compared with attempting to manually crack the nucleus. The softened nucleus can be emulsified in less time, leading to much less corneal edema (Figure). Next, for a patient who has small eyes and therefore a shallow anterior chamber, performing a manual capsulotomy is challenging because of the propensity for radial tears during the procedure. This is not an issue with the laser. I have found that in nearly all patients I am able to position the IOL precisely because the capsulotomy is very precise.

I also use the CATALYS Precision Laser System for astigmatic correction. I perform intrastromal arcuate incisions, and the laser is more precise in delivering the cuts at the exact desired location. Also, because the procedure is performed intrastromally, there is no epithelial defect, which can cause patients discomfort and increase the risk of infection. Up to about 1.50 D of astigmatism can be corrected using the system and this procedure is included in the cost of the cataract surgery.

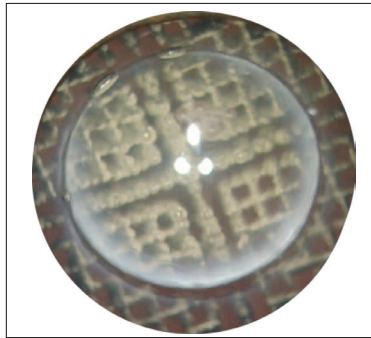


Figure. A fragmented and softened nucleus using CATALYS.

ADVANTAGES OF CATALYS SYSTEM AND FORTEC MEDICAL

The primary reason I wanted to use the CATALYS Precision Laser System over other laser systems is because I can perform the capsulotomy very rapidly with no unfinished tags. The speed of the capsulotomy step makes it less likely that patient movement will cause a partially completed capsulotomy.¹ It makes sense to work with a unit that has a better surgeon experience in terms of delivering a complete capsulotomy.

While the laser is superior, in my opinion, so too are the Fortec Medical technicians that set up and assist with the laser. These technicians

come with a wealth of knowledge and experience. They are able to suggest settings and tips related to laser delivery based on their observations with many experienced surgeons. The reliability of Fortec Medical has also been outstanding. Each time I arrive at the surgery center, the technician has already tuned up and optimized the equipment so not a minute is wasted. Fortec Medical takes its job seriously and makes it much less stressful for the surgeon. The trained technician is a hugely underappreciated benefit of leasing the CATALYS Precision Laser System.

The CATALYS Precision Laser System leased through Fortec Medical has been a great addition to my practice, because it has exceeded my expectations in the quality of the outcomes, the safety of the procedures, and the financial benefit the procedure delivers. I believe that if physicians want to flourish in today's cost-cutting environment, they have to think hard about how to position their practice so that it is less dependent on insurance payments and more dependent on direct patient payments. ■

1. Friedman NJ. A comparative look at femtosecond lasers for cataract surgery. Ophthalmology Web. ophthalmologyweb.com/Featured-Articles/158826-A-Comparative-Look-at-Femtosecond-Lasers-for-Cataract-Surgery-Part-I/. April 14, 2014. Accessed March 16, 2016.

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