

# Glaucoma, a silent cause of sight loss

*Glaucoma is an asymptomatic disease, but is the leading cause of irreversible blindness in western countries.*



Prof. Kaweh Mansouri, glaucoma specialist.

## JULIANE RICHARD

The condition causes a build-up of pressure inside the eye, which damages the optic nerve, resulting in a decrease in the field of vision and gradual loss of sight. Swiss Visio Montchoisi, a centre of excellence in ophthalmology located in the heart of Lausanne, specializes in the management of ocular pathologies, including glaucoma. We interviewed Professor Mansouri, FMH Specialist in Ophthalmology and Ophthalmic surgery, twice ranked in the Top 40 under 40 ophthalmologists worldwide and a Top 5 under 50 glaucoma specialist worldwide.

### **You are an internationally renowned expert in glaucoma.**

#### **Can you tell us more about this disease?**

Glaucoma is an insidious condition, and patients do not experience any warning signs or symptoms in the early stages. That is why it is important for anyone aged 40 or over to undergo regular screening from an eye specialist. Glaucoma is a chronic condition, meaning that it cannot be cured. However, there are very effective treatments available that stop

it from progressing and prevent patients with glaucoma from suffering permanent loss of sight. At the Glaucoma Research Centre in Swiss Visio Montchoisi, we are actively conducting research in this area to understand the underlying causes of the disease, improve diagnostic methods, and develop innovative surgical procedures to combat it. We are fortunate enough to welcome patients from all over the world, thanks to our recognised expertise in glaucoma. Having a diverse range of patients gives us the chance to study rarer pathologies, and also encourages young colleagues from the five continents to come to our centre for training.

#### **You mentioned screening, what does that involve?**

The only way to detect glaucoma early is through an eye examination by an ophthalmologist. We recommend screening every three years after the age of 40. This test, which is carried out by an ophthalmologist, lasts about 20 minutes and is both painless and harmless. The specialist uses a slit lamp, which emits a light beam, to observe the

inside of the eye. They then measure eye pressure and look at the fundus of the eye to carefully examine the optic nerve and retina.

#### **What are the latest advances in glaucoma treatment?**

In terms of diagnosis, advances in imaging have made it possible to better detect early-onset glaucoma and unstable glaucoma. A number of sensors, both inside and outside of the eye, also allow us to measure and monitor intraocular pressure continuously. This represents a revolution in management of glaucoma. Our partnership with the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (EPFL) and a start-up based in Germany have made us one of a handful of centres in the world to provide the latest advances in continuous intraocular pressure monitoring and surgery to our patients. We still have a lot to learn about this disease, which is why our research foundation founded in 2017, called Swiss Glaucoma Research Foundation, has the goal of organizing and funding studies to better understand, diagnose, and treat glaucoma.

#### **Tell us more about Swiss Visio Montchoisi.**

Swiss Visio Montchoisi is led by Prof. André Mermoud, ranked 27th in the world by the prestigious Ophthalmologist Power List 2018, and I personally lead the Glaucoma Research Center. Our team is made up of internationally renowned ophthalmologists, resident doctors, and certified and experienced optometrists. In addition to glaucoma, we treat all eye diseases such as cataracts, corneal and retinal diseases, and macular degeneration. Our centre can also handle ophthalmological emergencies. Additionally, we are opening a refractive surgery unit in January 2020. This is a proven, painless and safe procedure to correct all types of visual disorders, such as short- and long-sightedness, astigmatism, and presbyopia.

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