SUMMARY

Objective: Evaluate the visual function (VF) and the quality of life (QOL) in patients with cataracts (visual acuity = 20/200 in the best eye) before and after from the surgical treatment.

Materials and Methods: The result of a great program of cataract’s surgery is reported in “Dos de Mayo” National Hospital (Lima). The instruments in the way of questionnaires of FV and QOL respectively, were administrated to 130 patients that were admit to surgery of cataracts a month before of it and 3 and 6 months postoperatively. Standard clinical procedures were followed, including measurement of visual acuity. Within-interviewer reproducibility was measured preoperatively in a separate study of 29 patients.

Results: The average age of the participants was 69.4 years. The scores obtained in the questionnaires have a close and direct relation with the visual acuity degree. The alphabetization degree was related by both questionnaires (P<.044) in the same way than the age (P<.001). The internal consistency (Cronbach α) was =0.90 and the reproducibility index =0.86. The best finally visual acuity was obtained by patients with start visual acuity of 20/200 and 20/400. The differences pre and postoperatively in all the categories are highly signified (P<.001), with no differences among the results obtained on the 3 and 6 postoperatively months. The percentage of patients who required help in their daily activities, was reduce to signify levels at the P<.001 or more.

Conclusion: The visual impairment produced by cataracts cause a declivity in the QOL. The cataract’s surgery is efficient to recover the VF and the QOL, being this information entire quantifiable through questionnaires establishing a new method to evaluate the visual impairment produced by cataracts. The study also gives a strong evidence of the validity, reproducibility and sensibility of the instruments, and the necessity to use them furthermore of the visual acuity to priority the necessity of the surgical treatment.

Key words: Cataracts. Visual Function. Quality of life.