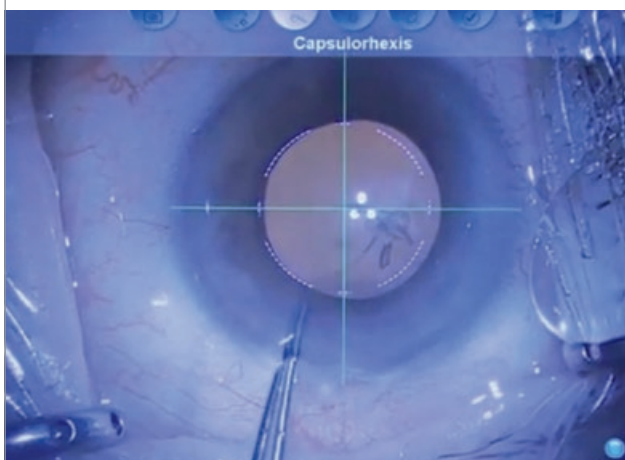




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## Letters

### Antibiotic Resistance

I read with great interest the article concerning the problem of increasing antibiotic resistance of infectious organisms (News in Review, July).

For years we have used povidone-iodine in surgical preparation, but not necessarily for routine use in the office. Is there any reason not to use this safe and effective preparation after taking the usual swabs for culture and sensitivity and awaiting the laboratory results? In the present climate of increasing costs of medication and antibiotic resistance, should we not revisit the use of a safe and effective medication?

*Robert A. Nelson, MD  
Gualala, Calif.*

### Operating on Your Mother

Operating on a colleague (Opinion, August) is a little like operating on your mother, only easier.

Your colleague understands the dangers and risk of complications. Your mother's response to these? "Ahhh ... no!" You see your colleague rarely. You see your mother all the time, but to her it's never enough. "I never see you anymore" is the constant refrain despite frequent visits during the week and phone calls every few days.

I operated on her because she wanted only me to do it. "What if I want to speak Armenian to you while you're operating?" That is when I gave in, much to the relief of my skilled partner. Despite all my misgivings and fears of nervousness or a capsule tear with vitreous loss, the operation went smoothly. As soon as I started, Mom became just another cataract surgery patient. She obeyed my request not to talk (not Armenian or anything else). I was pleased, as was my partner, whom I forced to be my assistant in case I cracked and needed to hand him the keratome. We are all experienced in the repetitive motions of this surgery. It should not surprise us that we do it automatically, and well.

In her later years after my father died, Mom would come to my office to help out in the reception area, and then began to help calm patients in the OR while they were having surgery—a gig that went on for 5 or 6 years. She held their hand and gently stroked it during the 15-minute surgery. They loved it, and so did she. It kept her busy and feeling like she was contributing, and also pleased my patients immensely.

Mom lived until 2002 (to 93!) and always delighted in telling anyone who would listen about how her brilliant son allowed her to see without glasses (well before the advent of presbyopic lenses, I might add). Looking back, I miss her companionship on those drives to the office, as she—all the while—tried to teach me how to speak Armenian.

*Roger V. Ohanesian, MD  
Laguna Beach, Calif.*