



One of the pioneers of excimer laser eye surgery discusses Eye surgeries in Croatia



Dr Ratimir Lazic is one of the leading eye surgeons operating in Europe. In his many years of experience he has performed an extensive variety of surgical eye procedures & has pioneered a number of innovative treatments. He is currently based at the Sjetlost Eye Clinic in Zagreb, Croatia, which is one of the best specialist eye facilities in Europe.

Medical Traveller Magazine recently spoke with him to learn about this outstanding clinic and see how its services could benefit UK patients.

*** MT: What is different about the eye services you provide at Sjetlost to those offered at hospitals elsewhere?**

RL: Sjetlost is the largest privately owned eye clinic in Southeast Europe with an exceptional record of success. We have forty of the region's best ophthalmologists working with us and use only the latest equipment and technologies.

*** MT: How many patients does the clinic treat per year?**

RL: We treat over 5,000 patients annually. The most common procedures we carry out are ocular and squint surgeries, cataract surgery, LASIK refractive procedures, vitrectomies, as well as corneal grafting procedures for patients with glaucoma. We also offer treatments for macular diseases, diabetic retinopathy,

glaucoma, strabismus, diplopia and other eye problems.

*** MT: Patients from the UK most commonly travel to the clinic to receive cataract surgery, how many cataract procedures can you offer each year for UK patients?**

RL: Yes cataract surgery is a popular procedure amongst our British patients. Our capacity allows us to carry out over 1,500 cataract procedures on UK patients annually.

*** MT: So why do you think Sjetlost is such a popular choice for cataract surgery amongst UK patients?**

RL: Sjetlost is well regarded worldwide for its high standards. We offer premium intraocular and multifocal lenses that boast many advantages to standard lenses. Yet both of these lenses are not currently available to NHS patients and the costs are much cheaper than UK prices.



*** MT: The clinic has a very low complication rate, how has this been achieved**

RL: We have a very low complication rate thanks to our highly qualified surgical team. All of our surgeons have carried out over 10,000 cataract surgeries in their careers. Many of our surgeons have been certified teachers at world-leading surgical eye equipment developers like Alcon, Bausch and Lomb, AMO, ZEISS and Tecnis.

Overall our complication rates are lower than the standard complication rates of most clinics, as we thoroughly examine each patient pre-operatively, by performing extensive diagnostic tests. Then post-operatively, we see patients regularly to thoroughly inspect for any signs of inflammation or rise in eye pressure.

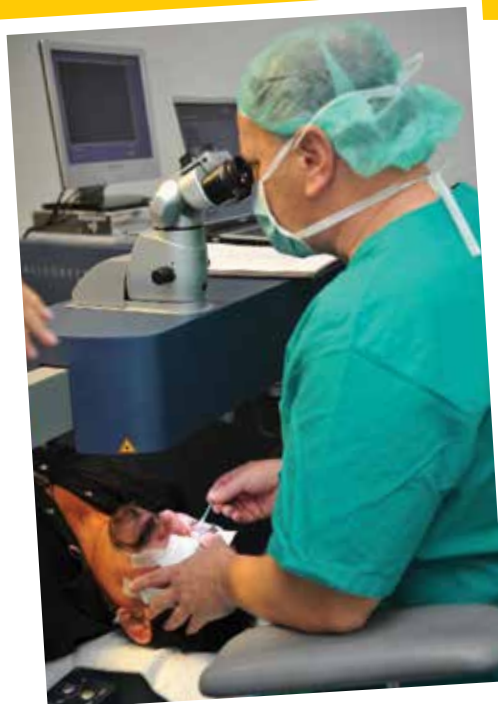
*** MT: What type of lens implants do you use for cataract surgery?**

RL: We are very proud of our extensive range of lenses. We use lens implants from the leading lens manufacturers of Western Europe including: Alcon, AMO, Bausch and Lomb, Zeiss and Tecnis.

With the UK's NHS, all lenses come in standard monofocal form whereas we provide lenses from the same manufacturers in premium form, such as multifocal, trifocal, etc.

*** MT: So how exactly do you decide which lenses to use for each individual patient?**

RL: This is a careful and well-thought-out process, which looks at the individual patient's post-operative needs and expectations, as well as their individual eye characteristics.



*** MT: And what are the benefits to the lenses you use over those offered by the NHS?**

RL: Our premium lenses assure patients they will not need to wear spectacles post-operatively, for distance, computer usage or reading. They also correct astigmatism. Standard NHS lenses are simply unable to do this and so patients end up needing to use glasses again.

*** MT: But UK patients can get multifocal lenses at home-based private facilities, so why do you think so many are still choosing S Svetlost instead?**

RL: The average cost of such a procedure in the UK is up to £6,000 per eye. Whereas, the same procedure at S Svetlost costs a maximum of £2,000 per eye. We are talking about the same type of lenses, from the same manufacturer implanted using the same procedure, with low complication rates, for a radically reduced price.

*** MT: But how can it be so much cheaper?**

RL: Mainly because of the different economic standings of the countries, labour and infrastructure costs are much lower in Croatia.

We offer the same price list to both domestic and foreign patients, keeping the costs low for UK patients.

*** MT: Tell us more about the other medical specialisms that are offered at S Svetlost?**

RL: To correct nearsightedness, farsightedness or astigmatism, we offer state of the art refractive LASIK surgery, which uses an excimer laser to reshape the cornea. This is the most up-to-date approach in LASIK surgery and the entire procedure is complete in a mere 5 minutes.

We also offer phakic intraocular lens implantation using implantable collamer lenses (ICL). It's a great procedure for contact wearers. It omits their many disadvantages, such as daily hygiene procedures and nighttime removal, not to mention the high cost.

We have treated thousands of patients suffering from the devastating eye disease macular degeneration using our anti-VEGF therapy, which we pioneered in 2005.

*** MT: And finally, and importantly, are your services available to current NHS patients?**

RL: Yes of course. NHS patients have the right to submit a request to travel abroad for medical treatment to their NHS commissioner, in order to avoid long waiting lists at home. Subsequently, they can apply for a reimbursement of their surgery costs.

For additional information, about Dr Lazic or eye surgeries at S Svetlost, visit S Svetlost's website at <http://www.svetlost.hr>