

Diagnosis error revealed 15 years on

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A KINGS Hill woman who has been treated for an eye condition for 15 years has found out she never suffered from the illness.

Juliet Morris, 73, of Sturmer Court, was diagnosed with glaucoma, a condition which, if left untreated, can lead to a reduction of sight or blindness.

Glaucoma is a group of conditions in which the optic nerve suffers a form of damage at the back of the eye.

Since she was diagnosed 15 years ago, Mrs Morris has taken eye drops twice a day, every day, and attended regular check-ups.

It was not until she visited Kings

Hill Opticians in May last year that new technology was used to check Mrs Morris' eyes, with the test concluding she did not suffer from the problem.

Two weeks ago she was taken off her medication indefinitely.

She said: "I was obviously relieved when I heard."

"It hasn't bothered me too much as it hasn't stopped me following any of my normal activities, but one does worry it could get worse so it is a relief."

"It's a waste as well because I've had drops for 15 years and the cost must mount up."

She added: "Funnily enough I have a friend in Norfolk and all of a sudden she said she doesn't have it either."

The International Glaucoma Association's chief executive David Wright admitted it was becoming more common for people who had been diagnosed with glaucoma to be told they do not have it.

"It's perfectly likely for people to have been diagnosed with glaucoma who haven't got it but it doesn't mean for a moment they don't develop it in the future," he said.

"It is a cost (for medication) but provided it's not unnecessary medication there's not a problem with cost - these people have had 15 years of medication but they see perfectly well, have had regular check-ups and have not suffered."

"No harm has been done but in fact some good has."

GLAUCOMA FACTS

- Glaucoma is the name given to a group of conditions in which the optic nerve suffers a form of damage at the back of the eye. The optic nerve damage causes patchy loss of vision that varies in severity from patient to patient.
- It can lead to blindness and is the leading cause of preventable blindness.
- Glaucoma of some type is found in about two per cent of the population over the age of 40. It can also affect children and young adults, although much less frequently.
- It is estimated that more than 500,000 people suffer from glaucoma in England and Wales.
- Everyone over 40 years of age should ensure that they have regular sight tests every two years to discover if their eyesight has deteriorated. These tests are a good opportunity to check for any signs of glaucoma.
- The most common form of glaucoma, primary open angle glaucoma, is sometimes not detected by patients until it has got to an advanced stage. This can be because an unaffected eye can fill in for the other. The detailed central vision is not affected until a late stage and people wrongly assume the reduction in their vision is simply due to age.



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BEAR NECESSITIES: Tallulah Hobden enjoys the jungle bus



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ANIMAL MASK: Pre-school manager Julie Stevens with Lennon Stevens

Tots scramble for a rumble in the jungle bus

CHEETAHS, tigers and monkeys were at play at St George's Pre-School in Wrotham when a discovery bus came for a visit.

The 16 children, aged between two and four, were able to dress up as animals and take part in a host of activities on the bus - a free service supplied by Kent County Council which is decorated as a jungle.

Arts and crafts, dressing up, quizzes, puzzles, badge making, photographs and puppets were some of the things on offer.

Pre-school manager Julie Gates said: "The children loved it. It was a huge success."

"It was a lovely opportunity for them to enjoy the same activities they do all the time in the classroom, but in a different environment."

She added: "We realised many of the children hadn't been on a bus before so it was a great opportunity for them."

TIGER EYES: Bryony Brown enjoys the Kent Discovery Bus themed as a jungle



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MONKEY BUSINESS: Lennon Stevens with an orangutan

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