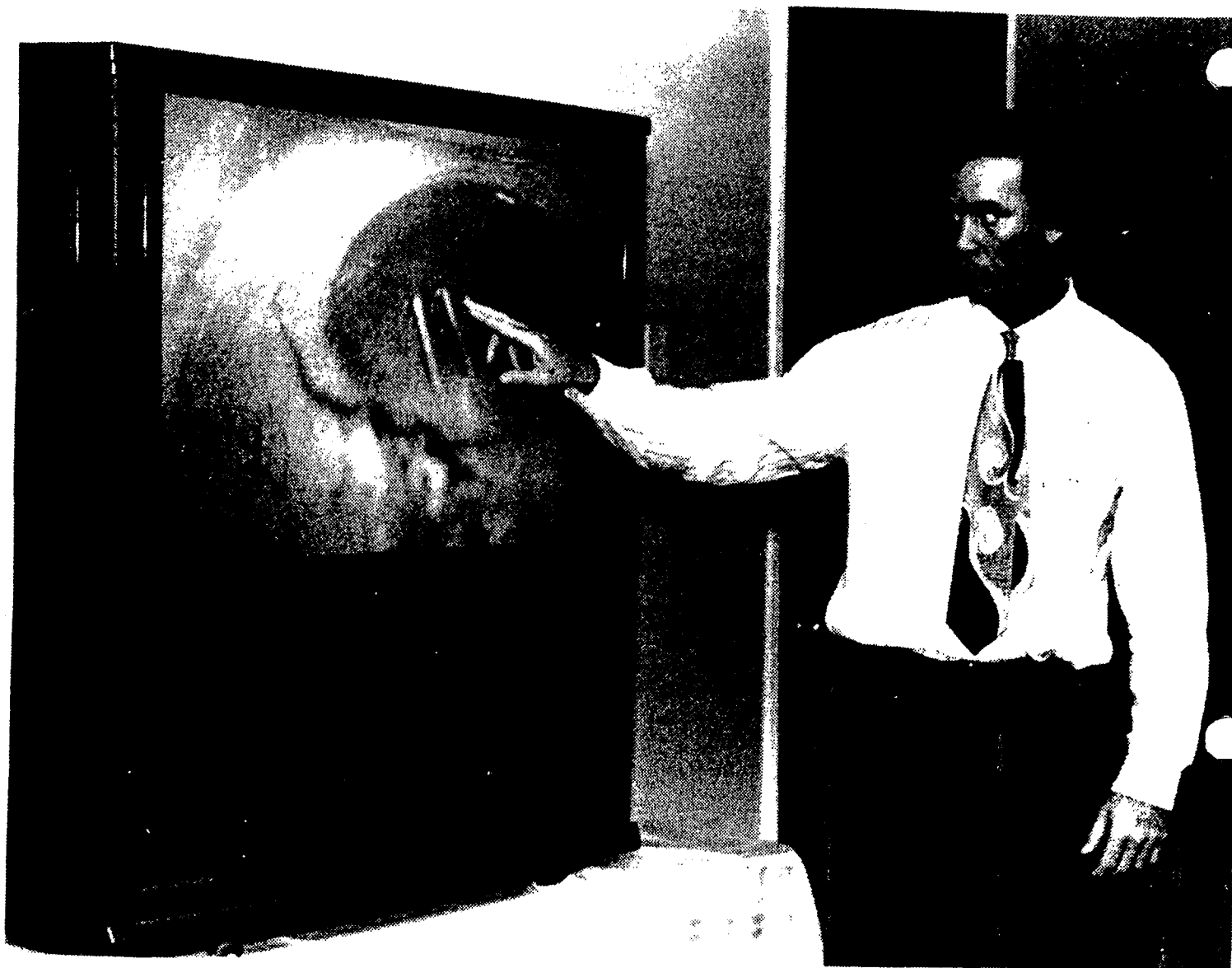


# Eyeing innovation



Dr. Mike McFarland moderates during a cataract surgery demonstration by Dr. Keith Stolte of Angleton. A group of 22 doctors were scheduled to attend the conference on sutureless cataract surgery, which included Stolte's Friday afternoon demonstration at Angleton-Danbury General Hospital.

# Physicians eye cataract procedure at ADGH

By TRICIA CUNNINGHAM  
Staff-Writer

An Angleton ophthalmologist performed sutureless cataract surgery Friday for a group of about 20 ophthalmologists from around the country attending a special seminar at Angleton-Danbury General Hospital.

Dr. Keith B. Stolte, who operates Stolte Eye SurgiCare Associates, showed doctors a technique that makes cataract surgery safer and more successful, said Dr. Mike S. McFarland of Pine Bluff, Ark., who invented the procedure, which makes stitches unnecessary.

"Sutureless surgery is the hottest topic in cataract surgery," said McFarland, who moderated as Stolte performed cataract surgery on four patients at ADGH. "The benefits are tremendous over what standard surgery offers. The main benefit is that it heals extremely fast."

Doctors attending the session watched the procedure on a big-screen television. The surgery was videotaped through a camera in a microscope, so the screen displayed a close-up picture of the eye for viewers.

McFarland said sutureless surgery has a higher success rate than other types. The only way to improve this method of replacing an eye's lens which has become cloudy, would be to develop a multi-focal lens that is a better copy of the eye's natural lens, McFarland said. He said that will probably happen in the future.

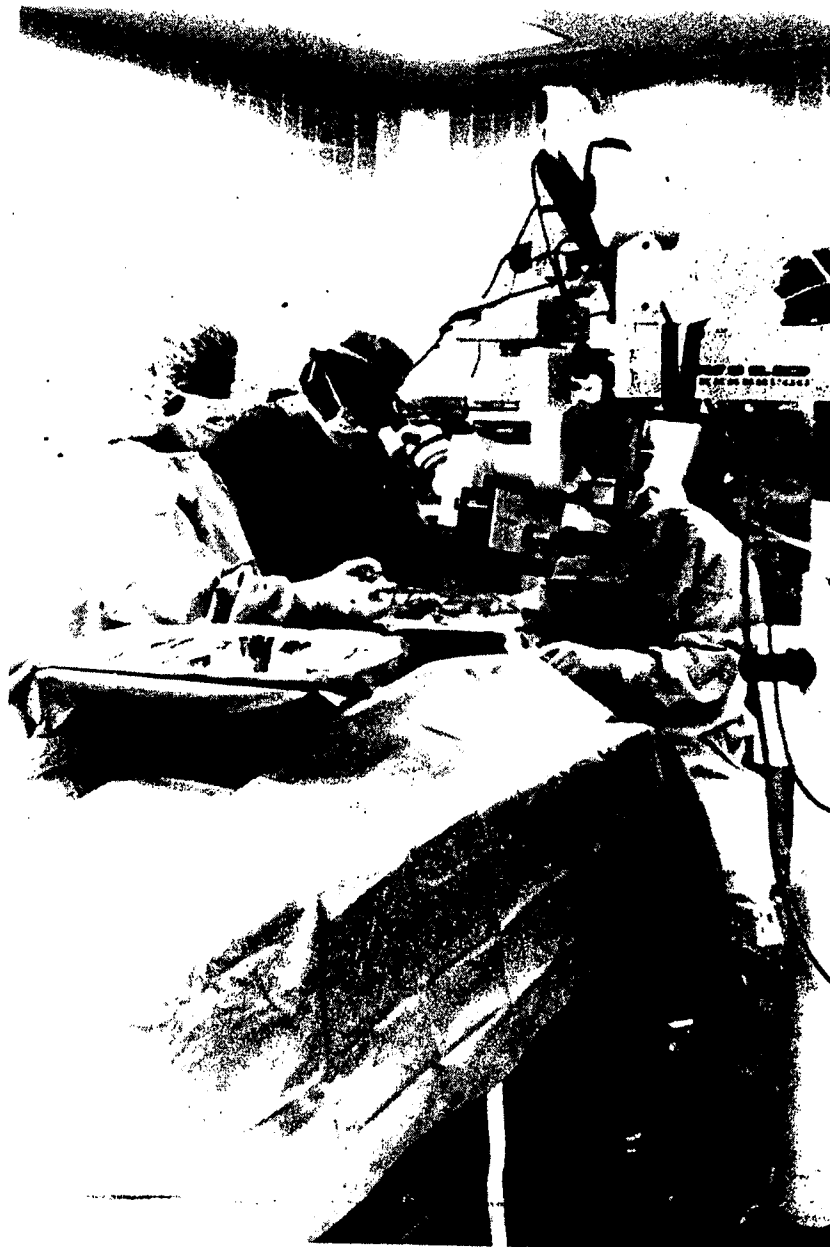
The sutureless method McFarland explained to doctors is used in combination with "phacoemulsification," a method invented more than 20 years ago to remove cataracts, or clouded lenses.

That method uses a small device with a rotary blade to go into the eye to break up the cataract and suction out the pieces. The sutureless procedure uses only an eighth-inch incision, which makes the cataract accessible then allows the incision to close itself naturally after surgery by relying on the pressure within the eye, explained doctors at the seminar.

Stolte said the sutureless method left less room for problems after surgery because it doesn't depend on stitches. There is less of a chance of developing astigmatism, he said. A patient usually recovers within a week rather than the six-to-eight weeks required when stitches are involved, he said.

The demonstration by Stolte was just one part of a two-day seminar, which took place mostly in Houston. The seminar was designed to teach doctors the sutureless method, to improve the way they conduct cataract surgery. The seminar included lectures, the demonstration at ADGH and a chance to try the procedure in a laboratory on Saturday.

"You usually don't see seminars like this at small hospitals," said Dan Martin, administrator of ADGH. "We feel very privileged."



Times photo by Tricia

Dr. Keith Stolte, an Angleton ophthalmologist, performs sutureless cataract surgery at Angleton-Danbury General Hospital for about 20 doctors attending a seminar on the procedure. Most doctors attending the seminar watched from the hospital's classroom, doctors had to watch through a microscope set up in the operating room.