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CUHK Introduces Laser Technology to Treat Corneal Diseases

The Chinese University of Hong Kong has recently successfully applied an excimer laser technique called **Phototherapeutic Keratectomy** (PTK) to treat patients with corneal diseases. Some of them may otherwise require corneal transplant.

The excimer laser can be used to treat many corneal diseases. It can also used to remove superficial corneal opacities as well as smoothen the corneal surface. A superficial and central corneal scar which causes poor vision and could only be cured by corneal transplant in the past can now be removed by excimer laser through PTK.

Besides treating corneal scars such as those caused by thermal burns, PTK may be the effective means to treat some painful corneal conditions. It can be used to treat corneal degeneration such as calcific band keratopathy, and granular dystrophy and painful recurrent epithelial erosion.

Another major development in the excimer laser technology is **Laser Assisted In-situ Keratomileusis** (LASIK), which requires a microkeratome to make a corneal flap before the laser ablation is performed on the corneal bed. This combined procedure is the state-of-the-art for treating high and severe short-sightedness.

To promote inter-flow in research, education and clinical services related to the excimer laser technology and surgery, the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences of The Chinese University of Hong Kong will hold an "International Symposium and Mini-fellowship on Modern Challenges of LASIK and PTK" on 12-13 April, 1997 at Prince of Wales Hospital, Shatin. The department will also conduct hands-on courses for skill transfer of this technology.

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