



# TIME OPH

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*Ed. note: An article in Lancet reports that body warming, either whole body or local heat, using radiant heating, can reduce the incidence of post-operative infections after clean surgery. They suggest that this technique may be as effective as pre-operative antibiotics.*

*Always looking for ways to be of assistance to our colleagues, we propose that eye surgeons consider the potentials of full body heating.*

## Full Body Heat

In one of Lancet's late editions\*  
 Research done by three clinicians  
 Offers us a bit of news  
 That ophthalmologists might use.

Their work is not just anecdotic:  
 Instead of drugs antibiotic,  
 Now used routinely as protection  
 Against unwelcome wound infection,

They substituted heat atop  
 The laparotomy site pre-op,  
 And they also used full body heat  
 To make pre-op drugs obsolete.

So . . .  
 It seems to me that we might try  
 A thermal pre-op for the eye,  
 With prophylactic drugs unneeded  
 If the eye has been pre-heated!

Medication bills would plummet  
 HMO's would profit from it  
 A sure-fire win-win situation  
 For HMOs and for the patient.

The patient's in a heated tub,  
 Good for the eye—but here's the rub:  
 For the surgical site to be accessible,  
 Must the surgeon, likewise, be undressible?

Since eye surgery is not X-rated  
 Hot tubs must be eliminated—  
 A shame to throw cold water on it  
 But the brass, alas, put thumbs down on it

Yet the research must eschew tepidity  
 For an eye heat trial to have validity  
 This dilemma must be why I can't  
 Obtain an eye heat research grant

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\*Melling AC, et al: Effects of preoperative warming on the incidence of wound infection after clean surgery: a randomized controlled trial. Lancet 385:876–80, 2001