



March at LVPEI

The aspiration of our community and rural eye health initiative is to reach out to all people in the geographic areas covered by our centres. Our typical complex of integrated secondary and primary eye care, what we call as “Village Vision Complex”, covers a 500,000 population with a secondary level eye care centre providing comprehensive eye care that encompasses prevention, health promotion, treatment and rehabilitation and linking to a cluster of 10 primary care “Vision centres”, each serving a population of 50,000. More recently, we have initiated going even deeper into the communities with the recruitment of a volunteer group - vision health guardians - in villages, to keep an eye on the eye health of 5000 people. However, our evaluation has indicated that significant gaps still exist in our coverage of these areas, despite the intensive focus on these communities. A pilot project, with the support of Essilor, of a mobile screening program, in the intervening areas between the Vision centres was initiated this month. The predominant aim of this program is correction of refractive errors with readily available spectacle dispensing and screening for diabetes and hypertension. Our hope is that this fully equipped van with equipment necessary both for good refraction and fundus camera for the screening of diabetic retinopathy will help to fill a large gap. Based on the outcomes of this project, further decisions will be made about scaling it up with appropriate modifications.

Another novel feature of our Village Vision Complex is their turning “green” with the installation of a solar power unit at one of our recently inaugurated vision centres. India in general and Andhra Pradesh in particular, are in the midst of an electric power crisis. These sources of alternate energy should help us in the long run in the delivery of our services in rural areas by making us more self reliant in our energy requirements. In fact, our very first Secondary Centre in Mudhole has had this benefit for over a decade with Solar Power equipment gifted by CBM of Germany. Yet another new Vision centre was inaugurated in Srikakulam district (north coastal Andhra Pradesh) taking our tally to 93. This is again a product of a blend of local support for the physical space and international support from the Lavelle Fund for the equipment and training of the technician. Another welcome development in the vision centre program was moving a currently functioning vision centre in the village of Cumbum (Prakasam district) to a new donated space with the contribution coming from one of the most successful IT entrepreneurs in our country. He donated his ancestral home for this purpose and got it renovated to our needs. I am delighted that the interest in the health care of the population in our rural areas is proliferating steadily.

Our institute is committed to high standards of education for all cadres of eye care personnel and access to written and published material is a major prerequisite for this kind of effort. We are very proud of our libraries and how these are maintained. The library in our Hyderabad’s Kallam Anji Reddy Campus owes its present status to the financial support from our long term friend and well wisher Mr. B R Barwale of Mumbai. He and his family have been a continuous source of support to the Institute for the past 15 years. During this month we hosted a workshop for librarians of eye care resource centres from 5 countries, which was organized by



the SEVA foundation of the United States along with the Association of Vision Science Libraries, through a three year grant from Elsevier Foundation's Innovative Libraries in Developing Countries Initiative programme. Librarians from the National Institute of Health and University of California, Berkeley, in the US were the resource persons. All the librarians that attended this workshop benefitted immensely from the interaction. The knowledge from this workshop will be further used to improve access to global ophthalmic resources.

Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of blindness in the world and a much neglected problem even among the relatively well educated and affluent individuals. A lot needs to be done in enhancing public awareness about this program. World Glaucoma week was celebrated from March 10th to 17th to achieve this objective. The focus for this year was on "early detection and prevention, importance of screening family members of people with Glaucoma and educating the public on the harmful effects of prolonged steroid usage". Various activities towards this goal were conducted by the Glaucoma services at each of our tertiary care campuses.

March is also the end of the financial year in India. The institute has had a reasonably healthy financial picture throughout the year. We could continue to maintain our tradition of "No Loans or Pending Payments". This was possible because of the continued dedication and diligence of all the members of the staff throughout the network. We were also able to carry out all the programs without any interruption for a financial reason.

It is always a proud moment if one were to be invited by the alma mater to deliver a prestigious lecture. G Chandra Sekhar delivered the Prof L P Agarwal Oration at the Dr. Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and Subhadra Jalali delivered Dr N D Lakhnupal Memorial Lecture at the Advanced Eye Centre of the Post Graduate Institute of Educational Research (PGI) in Chandigarh. Adding to that was the best paper award to the senior faculty given by the Indian Association of Medical Microbiologists to Savitri Sharma. Congratulations to all of them.

On top of all these, the Institute was selected for the "ICICI Lombard & CNBC TV 18 India Healthcare Awards for the best Single Specialty hospital in ophthalmology". Congratulations to the entire LVPEI team for this recognition.

The LVPEI family was deeply saddened by the loss of two people who had made our journey in the past 25 years easier – The Indian pharmaceutical tycoon- Dr. Kallam Anji Reddy, Founder and Chairman of renowned pharmaceutical company Dr. Reddy's Laboratories and Mr. Krishna Pathak, well known for his contributions in the building of modern Dubai, and for philanthropy. Dr. Reddy has been our friend, guide and supporter over the past 15 years and has offered us needed support on many occasions. Mr. Pathak has become a friend in recent years and very quickly became an admirer of the institute's work and contributed significantly to our education efforts in Bhubaneswar and Visakhapatnam. On behalf of the entire LVPEI family, I convey our deepest condolences to the two bereaved families.

Gullapalli N Rao