



May at LVPEI

“Quality” is the foundation on which our Institute was built and no effort was spared to practice this at every level throughout the past twenty six years. Formal process of quality assessment is critical for quality assurance and this is possible through a variety of approaches. Accreditation by an external agency is one such globally accepted practice. Such accreditation process of hospitals and health care facilities is a relatively recent phenomenon in India and the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Health Care Providers (NABH) has taken up this responsibility. Currently such accreditation is an official stamp of approval of quality for hospitals in India. We are delighted that our Bhubaneswar campus joined this exclusive list of very few eye care facilities in the Country this month (Hyderabad campus was the first major eye centre accredited about 2 years ago). The entire Bhubaneswar team rejoiced at the result after the long process and waiting they had to endure. Congratulations to the entire team. We are now waiting for the final inspection of our Visakhapatnam campus and hopefully its accreditation too.

Many of us from the Institute have visited a number of our collaborators in the U.S during May and had very productive discussions aimed at advancing our work in all aspects - service delivery, education and research. These are of particular relevance as we have an ambitious agenda for the next 25 years aimed at better care for our patients, higher standards of education and sharper research. Integrated into this is also the impact on the careers of many of our colleagues. Most of the collaborations are with Institutions and Universities of great repute and long history of excellence. This association inspires us into constantly raising our own bar for performance. Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins, University of Rochester’s Flaum Eye Institute, Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), National Eye Institute of N.I.H, Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic and Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) are some of the Institutions with whom we collaborate and had discussions. Also critical were the interactions with our long term partners – Lavelle Fund, Seva Foundation and ORBIS International.

One illustration of this collaboration that merits highlighting this month is the one with the University of California, San Diego. Jay Chhablani of our retina team and Bill Freeman of San Diego have been working on the application of a cutting edge laser system (Navigated Laser System) for the treatment of retinal disorders. This advanced technology improves the safety, accuracy, speed and patient comfort. LVPEI is one of only a handful of centres in the world currently investigating this technology and the first one in India. At the other end of our pyramid, in collaboration with Prof. Nance Wilson at the University of California, Berkeley, our community eye health team is discussing the idea of “Photovoice approach” for better community participation. Community members are provided with cameras to take pictures that convey “images of the world”. Based on the inputs from these, the community members participate in a dialogue about promoters for better ways of accessing eye care by the local community. The first phase of the project was completed with a small rural population and we are ready now for the next phase that will cover larger geographical areas and population.



These newer tools of community engagement will be of immense benefit to our programmes in rural communities and urban slums.

The extension of Vision Centre programme continues and the ninety fourth centre was inaugurated this month in Lingala village of West Godavari district. Prof. Rama Krishna Rao formerly of the prestigious Indian Institute of Sciences donated his ancestral property and LDS charities provided the equipment. Again this is a great example of delivery of health care to a rural community with local support and international collaborations.

May also is the month when all active eye researches from around the world congregate at the annual meeting of Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO). At Seattle (U.S) this year, our contingent had a significant presence at this meeting with many presentations and other contributions. Subhabrata Chakrabarti (Subho), our molecular geneticist, was appointed on the editorial board of ARVO's journal, Translational Vision Science & Technology (TVST). I congratulate Subho for this well deserved recognition for his excellent work. Subho has already been actively involved in various committees of this organisation.

Closer to home, a new research alliance was formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding with National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER) in Bhubaneswar. This will enable our colleagues in Bhubaneswar to pursue collaborative projects with the basic scientists at NISER. Both groups will benefit with access to each groups expertise and infrastructure.

Increased revenue is always welcome news and I am delighted that our Visakhapatnam campus (GMR Varalakshmi campus) recorded its highest ever monthly income along with highest number of surgeries in a day and LASIKS in a month. This, without compromising care for our non-paying patients, is laudable. Congratulations to the entire team at GMR Varalakshmi Campus.

Another exciting development was the introduction of Electronic Medical Records (EMR) in our Bhubaneswar campus. This EMR system developed in-house for all levels of care from primary to tertiary has already received much recognition and acclaim. My compliments to this dedicated team led by our dynamic ophthalmologist colleague, Vipin and supported diligently by the technical group led by Annapurna. We hope to complete the conversion process to EMR across to the entire network in the next eighteen months. This will have significant impact on every aspect of our work in future.

Technology and IT bring us to the person who is credited with initiating the IT revolution in India through the founding of India's biggest IT Company, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Dr.F.C. Kohli. A long term Board member and former Chair of our research foundation, Dr.Kohli was honoured by the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers of U.S with their "Founders Medal" at their meeting in Boston. He is the first ever, outside the U.S, to receive this recognition. Our felicitations to this remarkable gentleman! We are fortunate to have such a rich blend of people from diverse sectors with outstanding talent and intellect on our Board.

Gullapalli N Rao