



February at LVPEI

When the sight of a ninety five year old man, blind in both eyes, victim of deprivation and neglect, relegated to a cattle shed by his son, was restored by cataract surgery in one of our rural secondary centres, it deserves special mention. Here is an example where all the components of our rural eye care spectrum played a role to make that possible. During door-to-door survey, our field worker identified this person, counseled, cajoled and finally, personally escorted him to get his surgery done. It was a treat to see the smile on his face when his sight and independence were restored. These gratifying experiences continue to encourage us to expand our services to the neglected and marginalised populations. Hence our entry into rural Odisha, one of the most underserved regions of India. The first secondary centre at Rajgangpur was inaugurated this month by the former President of India, Dr. Kalam. The gift from a local industry belonging to the renowned Dalmia family turned out to be a spectacular looking structure staffed by mostly local people, selected and trained for this centre at the Institute. The centre will provide comprehensive eye care for a population of 500,000 around Rajgangpur in North West Odisha. As per our tradition, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation will be the constituent activities. Dr. Kalam made a special trip to be with us for the occasion.

While on the subject of “Rural Eye Health”, I am pleased to report the inauguration of an additional three primary care vision centres, taking our total to 114.

“Eye Care for the Elderly” has become a focus area for us as the Indian population is aging and growing. Towards this end, our flagship project in this area received generous support from a major pharmaceutical group of the state and India, Aurobindo Labs. The “Aurobindo Geriatric Eye Care Centre (AGE)” will be developed in our GMR Varalakshmi campus in the coastal city of Visakhapatnam and create a model which will then be replicated in other campuses. The cheque was handed over through the hands of the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Mr.Chandrababu Naidu. The centre will become operational during the third quarter of the year. We are grateful for this support from the Aurobindo group and to Mr. Nityananda Reddy for facilitating the process. Dr. Avinash Pathengay is the person behind this development.

Added to this was a significant contribution from another major Pharma group, Sun Pharma. This unrestricted grant will go mostly towards the development of our other focus area-Children's Eye Health. A Child Sight Institute encompassing all our centres and programmes in this area is being set up. A recent grant from the Lavelle Fund of New York will help in accelerating this process.

The above two are part of the six new initiatives launched as part of our “NEXT 25” at the beginning of our second 25 years. Another of these is the Centre of Excellence in Eye Banking. Our Ramayamma International Eye Bank will go through significant capacity building in all aspects with support from the Gunnam Ramayamma family that has commenced during this month. The “Institute for Eye Cancer” is another of these initiatives and we were delighted to receive a major grant from Operation Eyesight Universal of Canada (a philanthropic gesture from the family of James Killam, former chair of Operation Eyesight Universal). To all these generous individuals and organisations, we convey our deepest appreciation.



The Annual Champalimaud Research Symposium is a major attraction in our research calendar. It is getting better and bigger each year. Professor Shigeru Kinoshita of Kyoto, Japan was the Champalimaud Lecturer. He spoke on his pioneering work in the area of corneal regeneration. Prof. Vijay Raghavan, a very distinguished biologist and the current Secretary of the Indian Government's Department of Biotechnology was the keynote speaker. Other invited speakers included Prof. Manju Sharma, former Secretary of DBT, Prof. Denise DeFreitas from Paulista School of Medicine, Brazil, Prof. Sheila McNeil and Prof. Stephen Rimmer, University of Sheffield, UK; Prof. Adrian Glasser, University of Houston, USA. The different research groups of our Institute presented their work highlighting the progress made during this past year.

Several of our colleagues added to the prestige of the Institute with honours and awards, both National and International. My congratulations to each of them.

As I often say, many friends from around the world helped us generously with their “time, talent and treasure”. While we have received significant financial support during this month, many global leaders shared their time and talent adding to the vibrancy of our education endeavour. The outcome of all this is best described in the letter of this alumnus from South Yemen:

“Just yesterday I realised the real importance of a Patodia presentation. I realised how much confidence, how much the ability to participate actively in all types of scientific discussion, how much respect and silence there was inside the hall while I was talking; how much the attendants and audience listened to my comments. I am really surprised by the amount of respect for LVPEI and its values by international speakers from Germany and Italy.

Beside surgery and clinical skills in the field of retina, which is really amazing and admired by all my colleagues and seniors in Yemen and KSA, research work, scientific activities, academic events all make LVPEI very unique and different.” - Abdullah Hussein, South Yemen

– Gullapalli N. Rao