



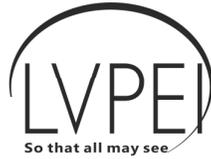
March 2016 at LVPEI

The aging of the population globally demands special additional requirements in the delivery of health care. Eye care is no exception. As part of our "Next 25" vision, we have launched an "Institute for Geriatric Eye Care" programme in our network. The first component of this was inaugurated at our GMR Varalakshmi Campus in the coastal city of Visakhapatnam. The "Aurobindo Geriatric Eye Care Centre (AGE)", designed by our Director of Education and vitreo-retinal specialist, Avinash Pathengay, looks spectacular with all the special features embedded to make the experience for the elderly unique. Funded by the leading pharmaceutical corporation, Aurobindo Pharma Limited, this will be a model that will be replicated across our network. All clinical and rehabilitation care will be provided through this centre. We are grateful to the Aurobindo group for their generosity and congratulate Avinash and the entire team at this campus for this trail blazing initiative.

While on the subject of "Next 25", I am pleased with the progress being made by our Tej Kohli Cornea Institute (TKCI) each month. This month our TKCI team, working with our secondary centre in the underdeveloped Dhulipalla village of Andhra Pradesh, created history by performing corneal transplantation at a rural centre. This is the first step towards enhancing access to such complex procedures to rural populations. Currently, a significant percentage of individuals referred to cities for such care do not actually access the care and remain visually challenged. Once established, this model will have significant possibilities for replication globally. Congratulations to the TKCI team led by Pravin Vaddavalli, who personally made this happen, and the Dhulipalla centre team for this achievement.

Another major TKCI event was the workshop on "Ocular Surface Disease". Our Institute offers a comprehensive Ocular surface service covering all aspects of the problem and offers the complete range of treatment modalities from early stage disease to late stage recalcitrant forms. Faculty at the workshop included leaders in the field from Harvard, Federal University of Sao Paulo, Mexico and Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. Participants also came from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. The format of the programme received rave reviews including the several one-on-one interactions. We are delighted to see the contributions of our faculty getting increasing international attention and recognition in this area of cornea. Some of the innovations in stem cell transplantation have made access to this form of care more available and accessible, enhancing its impact. Sayan Basu and Virender Sangwan deserve our compliments.

While on the subject of stars among our faculty, Javed Ali added yet another feather to his cap by winning the Alexander Von Humboldt Fellowship Award for advance research under the Experienced Researcher category. With this Javed joins a group of very distinguished researchers in diverse fields from all over the world. In ophthalmology, very few have ever got this recognition. His passion and focus on Dacryology, looking at every aspect of this rare speciality, will receive a big boost through this award. Congratulations to Javed on this superlative achievement.



We continue our efforts to expand low vision services, enhancing awareness and increasing availability of care for those with low vision. This month, along with faculty from New England College of optometry in Boston, a workshop was conducted for eye care professionals who came from all over India. These efforts are beginning to give dividends as more and more eye care professionals are extending their care into this important and often neglected area.

Our primary care vision centres number touched 133, with the first rural centre in the state of Odisha inaugurated. This centre has a very high degree of community support and participation.

As our network is expanding almost continuously, the need for consumables and spares is on the increase. We have begun to address this problem seriously through the creation of an Engineering unit to effectively meet these requirements and contain the costs. Early evidence indicates that this strategy is yielding positive results, thanks to Ashutosh Richhariya and his team. The future is even more promising when this pool of talent is combined with the one in our innovation centre.

Subhadra Jalali's crusade against blindness from Retinopathy of Prematurity is making progress as the district level government hospitals have begun implementation of the ROP strategy. She did her first laser in one such hospital successfully on a baby born at 27 weeks with a birth weight of 650 grams. This was the first such small baby to have survived in a hospital of this kind in the country. Congratulations to Subhadra and her team and may their efforts to control this blinding condition continue to succeed everywhere in the country.

March was the end of our financial year and we were delighted that our main campus in Hyderabad registered its biggest ever monthly revenue from paying patients. This state of financial health is fundamental for the sustainability of many programmes, like the one Subhadra elaborated above, to touch millions and make a difference.

- Gullapalli N Rao