



L V Prasad Eye Institute

May 2016 at LVPEI

Research has always been a major area of our focus since inception. For our team, the annual meeting of ARVO is an opportunity to participate in discussions on what is happening at the frontiers of eye and vision research, and hence our Institute was always represented by a sizable number. This year fourteen from our group were at this meeting. Multiple presentations were made, sessions moderated and chaired, and a number of collaborative discussions held. Several of us who were in Seattle also travelled to other parts of the US to foster the many collaborations we have with American Institutions, a tradition that has resulted in immense benefits to our research activity. Strong collaborations have emerged and prospered between individuals and institutions. This has helped us to build and grow a very strong research culture.

The recent publication by the Indian government's Department of Science and Technology (DST) of a ranking of the top ten medical scientists in the country included our stem cell expert, Virender Sangwan. He was ranked fourth and the only one from eye and vision research. Virender's journey at our Institute from fellowship to international stardom is a saga of inspiration for future generations. Congratulations to Virender on this recognition, so well deserved. Congratulations are also due to Mamatha Reddy for the "Innovative Biotechnologist Award" from the Department of Biotechnology. Prestigious fellowships to our optometry alumni Preeji Sudharman and Vivek Labhishetty and re-election of TP Das as Regional Chair of IAPB (International Agency for Prevention of Blindness) were among the other laurels earned during this month.

At our Tej Kohli Cornea Institute (TKCI), we have achieved yet another milestone, the dispensing of 1000th scleral contact lens (PROSE lens) to an individual with Stevens Johnson Syndrome (SJS). This special type of lens has become a boon to individuals with such recalcitrant corneal problems offering relief from symptoms and improving vision. These lenses were developed in Boston by Perry Rosenthal and we have one of the largest volumes of patients who have benefitted from this innovation. Thanks to Virender Sangwan for initiating this many years ago and to Pravin and Varsha for developing it into an effective service.

The role of information and communications technology in health care is rapidly expanding to cover all aspects of care, education and research. Enhanced access to good quality care and education that is affordable to all becomes possible and offers the promise of universal health care. Our collaboration with Microsoft in the recent past on exploring ways of exploiting the many of its technology platforms for eye health is making significant progress. In this context, it was a real pleasure to meet Mr. Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft in Seattle during my visit there to attend the annual meeting of ARVO (Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology). We are looking forward to tangible outcomes of the partnership very soon.



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Much has happened in programmes at the bottom of our pyramid. To assist in facilitating the robust rural eye health programme that we initiated about two years ago in the state of Odisha, a “Centre for Rural Eye Health” was inaugurated on our Bhubaneswar campus by the Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan. We gratefully acknowledge the funding from the Indian Oil Corporation. This resource centre will coordinate all our community and rural eye health activity in Odisha and is part of our Rural and Community Eye Health Component. TP Das spearheaded the effort to make this happen. We now have three rural secondary centres with two more in the pipeline in this state.

Our efforts to take high quality care - dealing with as many problems as possible - closer to where the most need is, namely rural areas, progressed yet another step with the performance of a major procedure to treat a tumor in the orbit at our secondary centre (our oldest one) in Mudhole in Adilabad district, one of the poorest areas in India. This step was taken after careful consideration of all factors. Milind Naik and his team are to be complimented for this successful step. During this time, a digital photography unit was also set up at this centre, using simple means. All these developments are compatible with our values of patient first, excellence and equity.

All these were part of a month where record volume of individuals was served across our network.

When the impact of our work transforms the quality of life of its recipients, it becomes an occasion to rejoice. If this is in the shape of enhancing the scholastic performance of young individuals, it is a cause for celebration. One example was that 35 of our clients undergoing rehabilitation training with us came out with flying colors in their exams for 10th and 12th grades. (Pivotal points in schooling in India). The multiple ways of supporting them included digital audio and Braille books, scribe facility, reader service, educational scholarships, remedial coaching etc. We are always filled with pride to see the difference our rehabilitation group makes in transforming lives. Kudos to Beula, Vijaya and their teams. Another story is that of a 16 year old who benefitted from corneal transplantation in both eyes from our Institute for a congenital condition, nearly 15 years ago, who secured 97 per cent in his school boards. As we expand and extend our corneal care under the umbrella of TKCI, thousands more of such children will benefit and attain high academic standards. What more can we ask for?

- Gullapalli N. Rao