



December 2017 at LVPEI

Our Institute's work in the area of corneal diseases over nearly thirty years evolved into one of the biggest and most comprehensive cornea care systems in the world encompassing service, education, research, innovation, advocacy, planning and policy. Our team has become one of the most reputed in the world. On this strong foundation, we have launched the "Tej Kohli Cornea Institute" (TKCI) two years ago, thanks to the generous philanthropic gesture of Mr. Tej Kohli, a UK based philanthropist, who has a passion to support the crusade against corneal blindness. This past year, nearly 60,000 persons were treated at TKCI, over 10,000 surgical procedures were performed, over 4000 corneal transplants were done, and the eye banking component of TKCI harvested over 10,000 corneas. In addition, 55 ophthalmologists were trained in cornea and 49 papers were published in peer reviewed journals. During the past two years TKCI has developed partnerships in Myanmar, Cambodia, Malaysia, Muscat, Kenya, Liberia, Oman and Mexico, in addition to nine Indian partners. Through these, the indirect impact would be even greater. The combination of right talent and resources is the formula for this success.

Congratulations to Pravin Krishna Vaddavalli and his superb team at TKCI for this excellent performance. Our long term friend and a renowned corneal specialist, Dr. Paul Dubord from Vancouver in Canada was with us to celebrate the anniversary. Several other eminent corneal specialists including Prof. Sanjay Patel, Chair at Mayo Clinic, Prof. Mark Mannis, Chair at University of California Davis, and Prof. Marian Macsai of Northwestern University in Chicago were with us during the month.

In addition, Drs. Audrey Rostov and Michael Bannit from Seattle along with our TKCI faculty, Muralidhar Rajappa and Sayan Basu, conducted a focused workshop on the advanced technique of corneal transplantation, DSEK. The objective is to significantly enhance the corneal surgeon capacity and competency in India and other countries. Thanks are due to SightLife of Seattle for their support to this programme.

TKCI has also sponsored the Kerarun, a 5 km run during the Annual meeting of the Cornea Society of India. Leading cornea specialists from across the world participated to raise awareness about the problem of corneal blindness.

Other programmes of our Education Academy included an advanced course on surgery of lids, lacrimal system and orbit, through cadaver dissection at our Mithu Tulsi Chanrai Campus in Bhubaneswar entitled "Bhubaneswar Cadaver Course".

A workshop on "Retinopathy of Prematurity" (ROP) as part of the Programme of Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust was also conducted. ROP is fast emerging as the leading cause of blindness among children in India and emerging economies of the world, and beginning to impact low income countries.



The grand finale of our “Academy for Eye Care Education” is the Annual Graduation Ceremony on December 16th. The Guest of Honour was Prof. D. Balasubramanian, Distinguished Scientist & Director of Research Emeritus. A total of 253 trainees completed their education programmes across multiple cadres during the year. Congratulations to each of these graduates.

As our primary eye care network is rapidly expanding in areas of greatest need, deployment of technology has become an added feature with tele-consultation as a component. We reached a milestone with the tele-consultations from primary vision centres to tertiary centres exceeding 100 in a single day. As we leverage more advanced technology, higher quality care can be taken closer to the door step of the people. Multiple systems are being tried out at this point to achieve this goal.

Our 17th Secondary Service Centre in Kothur of Rangareddy District (formerly in Mahbubnagar district) was inaugurated by Mr. Harish Rao, Minister for Irrigation, Marketing & Legislative Affairs of the Telangana state. The Guests of Honour included Dr. Lakshma Reddy, Health Minister and Dr. VC Nannapaneni, Chairman of Natco Pharma. Many of the local leaders were also present for the occasion. This is yet another great example of local industry support, with Natco Pharma providing 100 percent funding to create a comprehensive eye health system for the 500,000 population around Kothur village. The building looks spectacular and the location on Bangalore highway makes it very accessible. Contribution for the development of the first primary care Vision Centre linked to this made it a great start. Thanks to the entire Natco group for this generosity.

The Government of Odisha has formally recognized our Mithu Tulsi Chanrai (MTC) Campus in Bhubaneswar as the State Resource Centre for Eye Care of Children. Congratulations to the entire MTC team. This together with the appointment of our Vice-Chair, Taraprasad Das, to steer the Universal Eye Health Programme in Odisha is yet another opportunity for us to create a model and touch more lives.

While many of our colleagues received accolades, few deserve special mention. Anthony Vipin Das (Vipin) was selected as one of the twelve people for UK Government’s Chevening Rolls-Royce Science and Innovation Leadership Fellowship (CRISP) at the University of Oxford. Vipin, while being an ophthalmologist, is a tech geek and the main architect of our in-house developed Electronic Medical Record system. Congratulations to Vipin on this much deserved honour. Taraprasad Das delivered the prestigious Yasuo Tano Oration at the Asia Pacific Vitreoretinal Society meeting. My compliments to TP on this honour. Indumathi Mariappan has been appointed to the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India’s special task force on “Stem Cell Research and Regenerative Medicine”; a fitting recognition to her excellent work in this area.

“Fittle”, the 3D Braille printed puzzle developed by our Technology Innovation group was the first of its kind in the world and has won the Bronze medal at the 30th “Eurobest” Awards. We are now partnering with world renowned puzzle maker, Ravensburger to disseminate this globally. The young team who developed this deserves applause.



The story of Maureen Chisenga from distant Malawi illustrates how the work of TKCI is impacting lives. She developed corneal complications following cataract surgery ending in loss of vision. Various interventions did not restore her vision at which stage she was referred to us. She underwent corneal transplantation with reconstruction of her anterior segment. As she was leaving for home, this is what she had to say of her experience, “My experience at LVPEI has been an eye opener in the true sense.. Right from the security personnel to the patient care staff and the doctors, everybody has been extremely courteous and never made us feel that we are in a foreign land. All my fears and anxiety were put to rest by Dr Muralidhar Ramappa's assuring statement – 'You don't worry ma'am. We will take care of you.' And indeed, he did! Post surgery I have regained functional vision in my right eye. It feels so good to see things clearly again.” We are indeed privileged to receive the blessings of people from all over the world.

- Gullapalli N Rao