

December 2018 at LVPEI

Academy for Eye Care Education continues to be a vibrant part of our Institute with many long and short term programmes for all cadres of Eye Care personnel. We celebrated the Annual Education Day on the 5th of this month with 246 trainees receiving their diplomas. The trainees came from many parts of India and a few other countries of Africa and Asia. Prof. Uday Desai, Director of the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad, was the guest of honour. This group will now become part of our alumni, who have positively influenced the way eye care is delivered in many parts of India and other developing countries where they settle down.

One of the growing strengths of our Academy is collaborations with renowned Academic Institutions around the world. During this month we had the first combined clinical grand rounds with the Harvard-Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary group. This is one of the components of the collaborative agreement in education and research between our two institutions. Such initiatives are of immense help in raising the standards of education for the benefit of all our trainees that ultimately translate to better quality eye care to the people served.

Exit competency training in ophthalmic plastic surgery for comprehensive fellows; and a workshop on “Dispensing and Edging skills” for opticians in our network and partner hospitals were some of the other education activities during the month, in addition to the ongoing education programmes.

2018 was also a year where our growing digital education component has facilitated transfer of knowledge and technology to thousands of eye care professionals around the world. My compliments to the entire Academy team lead by Avinash Pathengay.

On the research front, it is heartening to see the work of our colleague, Soumyava Basu on “Ocular Tuberculosis” receiving a boost with the award of the Intermediate Fellowship from “Wellcome Trust/Department of Biotechnology India alliance”. Soumyava is one of the leaders in this field at this time. Congratulations also to Ramesh Kekunnaya, Head of our Child Sight Institute, for his appointment as Program Committee Member of Pediatric Ophthalmology & Strabismus by the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Subhabrata Chakrabarti was selected as Mentor for the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) Global Mentorship Program. His election as Vice-President of the prestigious Guha Research Conference (GRC) deserves special applause. We compliment several other colleagues who also received honours and awards this month. These contributions from our team, to the leadership of international organisations, enhance the image of our Institute and are also a mark of recognition of their standing.

In our rural eye health initiative, we have inaugurated our nineteenth secondary centre in Akiveedu village, West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh, our first in that district. This was an existing Lions Eye Hospital transferred to us. Outpatient services have commenced with surgical services to commence soon. While this is the latest addition to our secondary centres, this month also marked the twenty-second anniversary of the very first secondary centre in Mudhole village, Nirmal district of Telangana state. The Mudhole centre has become a model of integrated high quality comprehensive eye care to underserved populations in remote rural areas of the developing world.



Product development is yet another component of our Institute that is rapidly expanding. I have mentioned about the production unit of special contact lenses, Boston scleral lenses, in my earlier communications. We are delighted that this unit reached the milestone of 1000 lenses this month. The CEO of Boston Sight Foundation, the parent body of this product, conveyed special appreciation for this achievement. Added to this was the good news about the receipt of the government license for export of these lenses outside the country. Congratulations to the entire crew who made this possible. This success augurs well for our efforts to enhance care for persons with some refractory corneal problems.

Our Institute for Vision Rehabilitation organised the 21st annual “integrated camp” for children with vision loss on December 1st at Hyderabad. The camp’s objective was to aid in the wholesome growth of children with vision loss. To achieve this, the camp offered programs that revolve around education, recreation and socialization, in an outdoor setting. 453 participants including clients, their parents and siblings, volunteers and LVPEI staff joined the fun and laughter throughout the day. Children with vision loss had the opportunity to build social skills, develop self-confidence and practice their skills in a fun environment. The camp ended with participants sharing their experiences at the camp with each other. Major funding came from Synchrony Financial for this event, in addition to contributions from employees and volunteers; and we thank all of them for their support.

Let me close with the following lines from the pen of Navya Rekha, an optometry graduate from our Brien Holden Institute of Optometry and Vision Sciences, after the graduation ceremony.

*The moment which makes me feel proud
The moment which makes me feel confident
The moment which makes me feel I can live the life
The moment which makes me feel that I'm the one
Great pride and immense gratitude for my loved ones who made this happen.*

Indeed, the above verse can reflect the feelings of every single graduate of our education programmes.

- Gullapalli N. Rao