



July 2019 at LVPEI

Niranjan Pehere, Head of the David Brown Children's Eye Care Centre at our Vijayawada campus, relocated to Monrovia this month as the Clinical and Training Head of the Liberia Eye Centre. This is a big boost to our Liberia programme. Niranjan is an accomplished pediatric ophthalmologist with special interest in cerebral visual impairment (CVI). He has been associated with Vijayawada campus from day one and built a high quality children's unit and has also been involved in the evolution of the children's programme in Vijayawada. More recently he had a short stint at the famous Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital in London. When Niranjan informed of his desire to work in Liberia and spearhead our programme there, I was excited as this would strengthen our entire Liberia initiative significantly and accelerate its progress. Niranjan was moved by the enormity of the need in that country when he went for a week's visit to work at the Centre. He is already named as the Chair of the Ophthalmology faculty at the Liberian College of Physicians and Surgeons. He was also appointed to the "Pediatric Low vision committee of the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus" recently.

In our pyramidal model, tertiary care training centres (second tier from the top) are pivotal. The first two of these were inaugurated in July 2006 - the Mithu Tulsi Chanrai Campus in Bhubaneswar on July 3rd, and the GMR Varalakshmi Campus in Visakhapatnam on July 7th. Since then, these two campuses have contributed significantly to the realization of our Institute's vision and helped in the proliferation of our very important rural eye health segment that touches the most marginalized people. The entire staff and their leaders, Suryasnata Rath and Merle Fernandes deserve our compliments. May these two campuses continue to flourish!

Coinciding with the anniversary of Bhubaneswar campus was the anniversary of the Miriam Hyman Children's Eye Care Centre on that campus, which was launched a couple of years later. This centre has become an official resource centre for the state government of Odisha for all children's eye care services. It is the only such dedicated Centre in Eastern India.

On the occasion of this anniversary, a city centre linked to our Bhubaneswar campus was inaugurated to meet the increasing demand for our services. Prof. Peter Dolman from Vancouver did the honors. We had the pleasure of having Prof. Dolman as visiting Professor and special guest during this month at the Bhubaneswar and Visakhapatnam campuses.

As usual, it was a busy month for the Academy for Eye Care Education, with many programmes covering diverse fields. A Glaucoma Preceptorship programme was organized at our Hyderabad campus with Ophthalmologists from many countries such as Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Malaysia and Vietnam attending. The main purpose was capacity building in these countries to tackle the serious problem of Glaucoma effectively, both through better quality services as well as through better education for professionals.

Taking advantage of Prof. Dolman's visit, an Ophthalmic Plastic Surgery and Orbit workshop was conducted at our Visakhapatnam campus. Yet another focussed workshop was on the use Boston PROSE and scleral lenses for the management of some refractory corneal problems. The participants in this group included professionals from Sri Lanka and the Philippines.



We added another dimension to our rural programmes with the introduction of a Mobile diagnostic unit, with advanced equipment for diagnosis. This will cover a cluster of secondary centres, saving costs of replicating these facilities in each Centre. The mobile unit will cover two centres each week on rotation. Pravin Krishna led this project in coordination with Raghuram Vyas. Our Engineering innovation group helped in the design of this van.

As always, many in our team received various national and international honors during this month. We offer our congratulations to each of them for their achievements, and thank them for enhancing the image of the Institute.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum is a condition in the newborns, often caused by gonococcal infection in the mother. While well-established antenatal care has eliminated this problem in most parts of the world, it continues to ravage the eyes of the newborns in the deprived parts of the world, which have no access to proper health care. This was the case with a twelve day old baby brought by her 17 year old mother to our Liberia Eye Centre in Monrovia. Prompt diagnosis and aggressive treatment led to a successful outcome with the preservation of sight in this baby. If left untreated, it would have led to corneal perforation ending in loss of sight. We are now working on creating a preventive programme for this problem in Liberia.

- Gullapalli N Rao