



January 2020 at LVPEI

2020 started off with a spate of activities - some additions, some enhanced activities and some celebrations. The activities during the month covered almost all our functional units.

Last month, I have already reported on the soft launch of our Twentieth Secondary Centre in Siddipet of Telangana state on December 23. The centre was formally inaugurated on 20/1/2020 by Mr. Harish Rao, Minister of Finance, Telangana state. He also represents this constituency in the Legislature. The main donor for the project, Dr. Parthasaradhi Reddy, Founder-Chair of Hetero Group of Industries, was the Guest of Honour. This beautifully designed facility will serve the entire population of this district. In line with our tradition, most members of the team are taken from the local community.

Our model of giving access to advanced diagnostic equipment to our secondary centres through a mobile van, (the Pashyantu) has been replicated in Odisha. Chief Minister of the state, Mr. Naveen Patnaik, did the honours and the support came from the Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC). This will now cover the four secondary centres in the state. The model aims to provide access to such equipment in a cost effective manner through sharing among multiple centres. Initiatives like these put in practice our commitment of “Taking as much Care as possible closer to the doorstep of the people who need it most”.

The demand for our education programmes is ever increasing, leading to a need for additional infrastructure. To meet one particular need, we have doubled the capacity of the hostels for trainees in Mithu Tulsi Chanrai campus in Bhubaneswar. The new space was inaugurated on January 16 by Mrs. Mei Wen, Chair of Wen Giving Foundation of Australia. This was made possible by the support from Mission for Vision of Mumbai.

We are greatly indebted to all the donors for these gestures of munificence, which made the progress in all the above activities possible.

Multiple continuing education and professional development programmes were conducted for different cadres, with active participation of both national and international professionals. Some were intended for our staff for upgradation of their competencies. With rapid advances in knowledge, technology and techniques, these exercises are becoming more critical.

Our focus in research has been predominantly translational or clinical that can be applied by many practitioners even in low resource settings, with far reaching benefits. Our vitreo-retinal specialist Mudit Tyagi developed a novel technique to treat the problem of retinal detachment. This technique of using a biological tissue adhesive, fibrin glue, simplifies the technique, with fast recovery and minimal complications. Mudit was honoured with “Best Innovation of the Year 2019” by the Vitreo-Retinal Society of India.

Our team along with the team from City University of London held a joint symposium on Vision Science and discussed the various aspects of our collaborative research programme. Shrikant Bharadwaj led the effort from our side.



Our doctoral students Poonam Naik and Abhinav Reddy Kethiri won travel awards to attend the prestigious ARVO meeting and the Gordon Research conference respectively. Shivaji, our Research Director was included in the Academic Committee of the highly ranked University of Hyderabad and Javed Ali, Head of Dacryology was invited onto the Editorial Board of the Journal “Orbit”. This month our group had 45 peer reviewed publications in various journals. Congratulations to all of them, and a few others who won laurels, for keeping our academic and research activity so vibrant.

On the technology innovation front, our Institute got its first US patent for the Paediatric Perimeter developed by PremNandhini Satgunam and the technology team. Congratulations to the entire group.

In product development, our group engaged in the production and usage of Boston Sight Scleral lenses organized a symposium at the UM Eye Research Centre at the University of Malaya in Malaysia. This is to train the Malaysian Professionals in the usage of these devices.

Finally, it is a proud moment when our eye banking network crossed the 100,000 mark in harvesting donor corneas since inception. This record is the highest anywhere outside the US, and happening in a country where no such achievement was considered possible. This is a cause for great celebration.

All these have meaning only when lives can be changed. April from Taiwan, is the mother of a four month old, born without vision due to a rare corneal condition. She was referred to us by Prof. Ken Nischal of Pittsburgh. Our brilliant cornea specialist, Muralidhar Ramappa made the correct diagnosis and provided the needed surgical care that restored sight to this child. The mother’s joy knew no bounds. When the young mother expressed “For the first time since his birth, despite being thousands of miles away from home and communicating in a non-native language, I felt assured that my son was in safe hands”, we felt rewarded!

- Gullapalli N. Rao