



LV Prasad Eye Institute

## August 2020 at LVPEI

The founding mission of LVPEI was to develop a high quality Academic Eye Centre along the lines of the renowned Eye Institutes in the world. Conforming to this objective, every effort was made to create an enabling environment to attract and nourish talented ophthalmologists with academic aspirations. This turned out to be successful with a notable proportion of our faculty making a mark and getting recognition nationally and internationally.

One such person is Javed Ali. Starting with us as a fellow in ophthalmic plastic surgery, he soon demonstrated his aptitude for an academic career, and found his niche in the area of Dacryology. He revolutionized the concepts, understanding and management of lacrimal disorders. This has been one of the neglected areas of Ophthalmology for a long time. His contributions to this discipline were seminal, recognised through numerous national and international honours. This month's addition to his awards, from the American Academy of Ophthalmology-American Society of Ophthalmic Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery (AAO-ASOPRS), was special - "The Lester T Jones Surgical Anatomy Award" named in Honour of a legendary ophthalmologist who contributed immensely to this field. This is the second prestigious award for Javed from this Society. Such recognitions certainly add lustre to the individual and to the Institute.

Niranjan Pehere became the first member of our faculty to be inducted as a "Fellow" of the Liberian College of Physicians and Surgeons in recognition of his work in Liberia as Head of our Centre there. Abhinav Reddy's Ph.D, Swapna Shanbhag's induction into the editorial board of the Indian Journal of Ophthalmology, and Padmaja Kumari Rani's appointment as Global Health Associate Editor for the BMJ (British Medical Journal) Case reports, were the other laurels to our group. Congratulations to each of them.

Our fabulous Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system, has augmented our clinical research capabilities considerably in the recent past. This system was developed entirely in-house led by Antony Vipin Das, member of our ophthalmology faculty. The EMR team had a great run and just celebrated their Tenth Anniversary this month spreading to many centres in India and abroad as far as Mexico.

Through August, there was a steady growth in our patient volumes across our network. This upward trajectory is certainly encouraging considering the escalating number of Covid-19 infections in the country. The rigorous safety systems that we instituted are helping us to gain patients' confidence to return for their care. Our rural secondary centres continued their impressive recovery to pre-covid volumes.

One of the important components of our rural centre network is the linkages with local communities, and becoming part of those communities as a responsible organization. During the current Covid crisis, our rural network teams in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Odisha went beyond the duty of eye care. Over 550,000 patients and their families were contacted since April, nearly 125,000 in August alone, to enquire about their wellbeing, and provided support where required. This gesture received overwhelming appreciation from these communities, which often have no access to good health care.

Eye banking is yet another area of steady growth with our network harvesting 169 corneas and our team performing 152 corneal transplant procedures. While this number is smaller in comparison to last year, it represents a lion's share of transplants done in the country. The efforts of our dedicated and diligent staff coupled with support from major hospitals made this possible.

The support from our friends continued during this month, helping with uninterrupted growth as originally planned. Funding was received for the development of yet another secondary centre from Soona Brown and late Edward Brown. The site has been identified and the blue print is under preparation. We are deeply indebted to the Browns for this immense faith in us. This is their third such gift.

The story of eight year old Kunithi from a remote village in Visakhapatnam district raised our spirits. Kunithi was diagnosed with pediatric cataract and was not able to pursue her studies. She was advised surgery at our tertiary centre in Visakhapatnam (GMR Varalakshmi campus). The parents however, neglected the advice for several months. They finally complied, on repeated coaxing by our vision technician, and Kunithi underwent the much needed surgery. With her sight restored, she was able to return to her studies. The parents were elated and were profuse in their expression of gratitude that we made this possible for their daughter despite the omnipresent threat of Covid. We feel uplifted that we could do what we do best even in these trying times!

- Gullapalli N Rao