



November 2021 at LVPEI

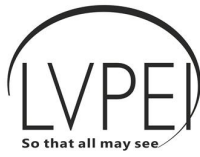
In November, we at L V Prasad Eye Institute witnessed yet another historical moment in our Institute's evolution – the graduation of the first batch of Ophthalmology residents from John F Kennedy Medical Center, Monrovia, Liberia. We launched this program in 2018 in partnership with the Liberian College of Physicians and Surgeons, Lions Club International Foundation and the Ministry of Health, Government of Liberia with the aim of making Liberia fully self-sustaining in human resources for eye care delivery. Dr Unity Honey Dokie Fahn and Dr George Tamba Bornguoi are the first graduates of this program. The formal graduation ceremony on November 12, 2021 was attended by Dr Niranjan Pehere, In-charge of ophthalmology unit at the eye centre and a member of LVPEI faculty. He played an important role in mentoring the first batch of the graduates. Please join me in congratulating Drs Fahn and Bornguoi and their proud family members.

The Week magazine annually conducts a survey covering 17 cities that are important medical centres and ranks top hospitals in different specialities. I am proud to say that all 4 tertiary-centre campuses of LVPEI appeared in the list of "Best Ophthalmology Hospitals". This ranking is a reflection of our team's commitment to eliminate needless blindness. My sincere appreciations to the entire team.

A group of researchers from Stanford University and Elsevier released an updated list representing the top 2 percent of the most cited scientists in various disciplines. We are proud that six members of our team, G N Rao, Prof Balasubramanian, Savitri Sharma, Jill Keeffe, Shivaji Sisinthy and I made into the list of the top researchers (lifetime achievers). Nag, Balu, Savitri, Jill and Shivaji were part of this list even last year. The Stanford group generated another list based on the research impact of scientists in a single year (2020). Twelve LVPEI researchers (including the 6 lifetime achievers) figured among the top eye researchers of 2020. It is heartening to see that scientists from LVPEI are listed among the top eye researchers worldwide and formed the majority segment from India. I would like to congratulate all of them for producing impactful research year after year and bringing laurels to LVPEI.

The stellar performance of our eye banks continued in the month of November. LVPEI network eye banks collected a total of 921 corneas and distributed 667 of these to surgeons within and outside our network for various transplant surgeries. Our partner eye banks are also demonstrating the same spirit of performance. Rishikesh Eye Bank, located in Uttarakhand on the campus of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Rishikesh collected 300 corneas in three years. The Rishikesh Eye Bank was developed by LVPEI in 2018 in partnership with the AIIMS and the Hans Foundation – a not for profit charitable organisation. We are proud of our eye bank teams.

The Standard Chartered-LVPEI Academy for Eye Care Education hosted 18 webinars benefiting over 1224 trainees. One of these webinars was the second edition of Indian Myopia Awareness and Research Conference. Myopia has become a major public health issue globally and in India. The conference is an initiative to disseminate awareness and the evidence-based practice for myopia control. 150 delegates (hybrid) from India and ten other countries participated in the conference. The second one was a unique initiative titled R2R (Reflect to Reinvent). Spread across a series of 30 sessions, this was an internal cross-functional team-building exercise, where teams brainstormed for solutions to make Patient Care at LVPEI more efficient. I would like to thank the team at the Academy who work tirelessly in designing and seamlessly executing these programs month after month.



In November, India celebrated a major festival – Deepawali. This is the festival of lights and people set off firecrackers. Due to unregulated sale and bursting of firecrackers, several people sustain injuries every year, with many losing vision and eyes. Due to the festival holiday, not many ophthalmologists are available to provide care to such victims. Our colleague Anubha Rathi put in place a special task force that worked day and night to ensure timely care to these patients. This year, the number of fire cracker injury victims was much higher than the pre covid era. Over three days from November 3 to 5, the task force managed 40 fire cracker related injuries at the Hyderabad campus alone. I would like to convey my appreciation to Anubha and the entire task force team for upholding the ethos of our profession.

I would like to end this newsletter with the story of a three year old girl from a remote rural area and our team member working in that area, who has made a difference in the life of this child. The mother noticed a white spot in the right eye of the child, and brought her to our primary care Vision Centre in Karempudi in Guntur district on November 16, 2021. The vision technician Prameela examined the child and shared the case details and photographs on teleconsult with the ophthalmologist at the Command Centre, who made the provisional diagnosis of Retinoblastoma – an eye cancer. The child was brought to our tertiary centre Kode Venkatadri Chowdary campus in Vijayawada for further evaluation and management. Thanks to the presence of Prameela and our vision centre in the local community in remote rural area, the life of this 3 year old will be saved. Our local team is making all arrangements for facilitating the treatment and supporting the parents. Several such stories originating in our network highlight the importance of the village vision complex (integrated model of secondary and primary care) in taking eye care to the doorstep of our population. Kudos to our founding Chairman for having this vision and the entire team of VVC for their contribution.

As I write this communication, the year 2021 is coming to a close. It was yet another challenging year filled with an unprecedented health crisis and natural disasters in many places around the world. Unfortunately, just when we thought we were going to see the end of the pandemic, a new threat of highly mutated OMICRON version is looming large before us. I wish all of you and your loved ones a safe holiday season during this time and hope the year of 2022 will bring respite from the pandemic and restore normalcy in our lives.

Wish you all and your families a very Happy and Healthy New Year!

-Prashant Garg