



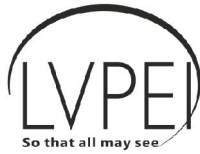
## May 2022 at LVPEI

L V Prasad Eye Institute strives to achieve its mission through its ten functional arms. These are: Clinical care, Education, Research, Rehabilitation, Community and rural eye care, Capacity building, Eye banking, Technology innovation, Product development, and Advocacy and policy planning. Advocacy is an important function that helps to enhance awareness of public health issues and I dedicate this month's newsletter to Advocacy.

We started the month with Whitathon – an annual run that we organise to raise awareness of retinoblastoma, a vision and life threatening eye cancer in children. Early recognition and treatment not only help to save life but many times, also vision and the eye. Our team led by Swathi Kaliki conducted the “Whitathon run” in Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam and Bhubaneswar and more than 2500 runners participated. The event received wide coverage in print and television media. In addition, public and school education programs were conducted at our secondary centres in rural areas. I was heartened to see the wider society engage with our efforts. I am also delighted to see that their commitment to raise awareness about retinoblastoma is increasing by the year.

Myopia or short-sightedness is a major cause of vision impairment and blindness, and of great public health concern as it affects millions of children every year. It is a major public health concern in East Asia and an emerging issue in India, as the number of Indian children with myopia is gradually increasing. Currently, 3 out of 10 children living in urban areas have myopia. It is projected that by 2050 myopia is likely to affect half the global population (5 billion) and will lead to vision debilitating complications in a billion people. In May, our team led by Pavan Verkicharla organised “Myopia awareness week” with several activities. They published awareness articles in newspapers, conducted seminars to educate clinicians, and launched the first LVPEI-ECHO myopia program, an online Zoom-based education initiative. Public awareness and building the capacity of eye care professionals in the management of myopia are the need of the hour and our team is leaving no stone unturned in tackling this important public health concern.

Assistive technologies are playing an important role in helping people with disabilities lead a better quality and more independent life. Many such assistive technologies are available today, many are developed all the time. On “Global Accessibility Awareness Day”, the team at LVPEI's Institute for Vision Rehabilitation organized an exhibition on Assistive Technologies to create awareness about available technologies and the ways of adopting them to daily use.

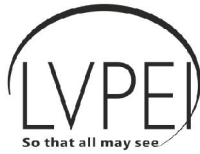


Each year on May 12th, International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world to honor and celebrate the contributions of nurses to our health and wellness. The inspiration behind the day is the iconic Florence Nightingale, the British nurse and social reformer who dedicated her life to the improvement of the health sector. In the LVPEI network, we celebrated the day by acknowledging and appreciating the contributions of our nurses as a part of the eye care team. Our nursing team reaffirmed their pledge to continue to serve patients with utmost dedication and sincerity. At the Mithu Tulsi Chanrai campus in Bhubaneswar, our team demonstrated this commitment by organising a blood donation drive. We are proud of our committed nursing team.

The month of May also marks several new initiatives and inaugurations. The Anant Bajaj Retina Institute – an institute of excellence and a global resource centre for retinal diseases - was formally inaugurated by the honourable Vice President of India, Sri M Venkaiah Naidu. The institute is named after late Mr Anant Bajaj, a philanthropist and major supporter of eye health and vision.

Mr. T Harish Rao - the Minister of Finance, Health, Medical and Family Welfare, Government of Telangana inaugurated our new satellite, urban tertiary centre the “Shirin, Etian and Tara Brown Eye Centre” at Gullapalli Pratibha Rao Campus in Kismatpur, Hyderabad. On the same day he flagged off an advanced mobile eye diagnostic unit, “Pashyantu”, dedicated to the service of rural areas in Telangana state. Both these new initiatives add to our efforts in taking eye care closer to the doorstep of those in need, both in urban and rural areas where we serve. The recognition as one of the four legendary community ophthalmology institutions in the country bestowed on LVPEI by the Rotary Avoidable Blindness Foundation is an acknowledgement of our contributions to community eye health.

Our team continues to excel, and May saw several members receive awards and accolades for their work. Swathi Kaliki has been appointed as a member on two committees - ‘Retinoblastoma Policy Brief for WHO Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer’ and ‘American Academy of Ophthalmology – Basic and Clinical Science course’. Vivek Singh was selected as a member of the National Academy of Science, India (NASI). A large team of scientists and clinicians attended the annual meeting of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) held in Denver, USA. After the travel restrictions of COVID-19, this was the first major meeting attended in person by our colleagues. At this meeting, Vijaya Kumari Gothwal was elected as a member of the Annual Meeting Program Committee to represent the Low Vision Cross-sectional group; Subhabrata Chakrabarti was elected as gold fellow of ARVO; PremNandini received the Pfizer Ophthalmics Carl Camras Translational Research Award; and Rebecca Sumalini received the Envision-Atwell award. Additionally, six research students successfully secured the Developing Country Eye Research Fellowship award and travel grant for attending and making presentations at the meeting. Please join me in congratulating all the awardees this month for bringing all these laurels to the Institute.



Let me end this newsletter with Kishtanna. 70-year-old Eggam Kishtanna is from Pardi, a remote village in Kubeer Taluk of Nirmal district, Telangana. Kishtanna had redness and watering in his right eye. On his friends' advice, he visited the LVPEI vision centre in Kubeer. Naresh, the centre's vision technician, examined Kishtanna's eye and noticed a tumor on his eye. Naresh immediately forwarded the clinical photographs through the "eyeSmart" app to the ophthalmologist at the tele-ophthalmology command centre in Hyderabad. The ophthalmologist reviewed Kishtanna's case sheet and quickly made a video call to the centre and advised him to visit the secondary service centre in Mudhol, about 30 kilometers away. At Mudhol, he was diagnosed with Ocular Surface Squamous Neoplasia (OSSN), an abnormal cancerous growth of the epithelial cells on the ocular surface. Kishtanna was immediately started on topical chemotherapy and was followed-up regularly. The tumor responded very well to the therapy. Kishtanna and the treating team were delighted that 90% of the lesion resolved within one month. Topical cancer treatment—that is, advanced, sub-specialty care—is now available at several of our service/secondary centres deep in southern India's rural heartlands. This development will save many of our rural beneficiaries from the hassle of travel to big cities, in addition to huge savings in time and money.

I urge you to step back, pause, and consider how fundamentally empowering this is. Decades of our collective investment into the LVPEI Eye health pyramid is enabling our fellow citizens in rural India to access high-quality, complex clinical care not very far from their homes. This is the miracle made possible by your commitment to LVPEI's founding vision: so that all may see.

-Prashant Garg