



September 2022 at LVPEI

Let's start with some wonderful news this month: LVPEI received the "Best Hospital award" in the national and regional (South and East) categories from the Financial Express. We are grateful for such recognition and acknowledge the trust of our patients and their families, trainees, and supporters, as well as the commitment and dedication of all LVPEI-team members. Their faith in our mission and their steadfast support for our journey towards eliminating needless vision impairment and blindness makes such appreciation possible.

I dedicate this month's newsletter to the elderly whose care is an increasing priority for us, and for the country.

Caring for the Elderly

Worldwide, people are now living longer with a proportionate increase in population of those above the age of 60 years. It is estimated that by 2025, there will be twice as many older people (about 1.2 billion) worldwide as there were in the year 2000 and by 2050, this population will be three times greater than in 2000 (around two billion). Further, it is estimated that 75% of elderly population will be living in low and middle-income countries.

The prevalence of disabilities related to vision, hearing, and mobility, as well as other health ailments, is higher in the elderly population. In lower-income countries, where different generations tend to live under one roof, the family has the primary responsibility of caring for older people—but may not be fully equipped to meet their needs. On the other hand, in most middle- and high-income countries, nuclear families are the norm, and older people are increasingly isolated and lonely. Therefore, an increasing elderly population will lead to unique challenges in the social and health care systems around the world.

Nearly a decade ago L V Prasad Eye Institute took the lead in creating an eyecare system that ensures holistic care for the elderly. The first dedicated elderly eyecare facility was set up at our GMR Varalakshmi campus in Visakhapatnam, with the support of Aurobindo Pharma. This service was extended further with similar facilities at our Kallam Anji Reddy (KAR) campus, Hyderabad, and Mithu Tulsii Chanrai (MTC) campus, Bhubaneswar supported by Gland Pharma Ltd and ICICI bank respectively. These dedicated centres not only provide eye care but evaluate each elderly patient for other ailments and conditions including the risk of dementia and falls, and provide necessary guidance for healthy living or appropriate referral.

We are also producing a series of systematic reports on various aspects of health, quality of life, mental health, morbidity, and disability amongst elderly living in homes-for-aged in Hyderabad, Telangana through the Hyderabad Ocular Morbidity in the Elderly Study (HOMES). Based on the most recent HOMES data published by our colleague Srinivas Marmamula, addressing vision loss can be the first step towards tackling basic issue of health access among the elderly who live in care homes. In addition, eye examinations are also good opportunities to assess and recognize other systemic issues in this population. A package of interventions, including assistive devices for sight, hearing, and mobility, and basic assessment for mental health support can be provided along with a comprehensive eye exam. This way, eye care can facilitate healthy aging and become a catalyst for effective elderly care.

A significant sub-set of the elderly cannot reach our health facilities, because they are bed-ridden or have restricted mobility. We are expanding the scope of our services to cater to their needs as well. Our "Home Care" program is an initiative where a trained allied health professional visits the homes of such needy patients or homes for aged to perform a comprehensive eye examination, provide necessary glasses or connect the patient to a specialist using tele-consult technology. In the month of September, the Honorable Chief Minister of Odisha, Mr Naveen Patnaik flagged off the first such



comprehensive Home Care program from the MTC campus. The program will be extended to all our tertiary eye care centres soon. Home Care services are offered within a radius of 20 km from the campus. The staff making home visits are provided two-wheelers and complementing LVPEI's 'Go Green' initiatives, Electric Scooters having 0% CO₂ emission are being used for this program.

Other events and highlights

Conferences and Seminars

The 28th annual meeting of the India Chapter of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) was held between September 9th to 11th. The conference was attended by 304 delegates (hybrid). The three named orations were delivered by Prof Mark Petrash, Executive Vice President, ARVO; Dr K Thangaraj, Director, Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics, Hyderabad; and Dr Mahesh P Shanmugam, Chair of Sankara Eye Hospitals, Bangalore. In addition, three keynote lectures, five special talks, 17 free papers and 136 posters covered multiple aspects of translational and fundamental eye research and technological advances, representing the length and breadth of eye research across the country.

The second annual meeting of the Indian Health Outcomes, Public Health, and Economics Research Centre (IHOPE) was also held at the KAR campus Hyderabad. IHOPE is a collaboration between the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, the Indian Institute of Public Health, Hyderabad, and LVPEI, supported by a competitive research grant from the Wellcome Trust/ DBT India Alliance. One of the key highlights of the program was the collaboration and knowledge sharing between the IHOPE team and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, UK.

Public lecture

In September, we hosted the annual Dr Rustam D Ranji Rotary Award Lecture, instituted by the Rotary Club of Hyderabad District 3150 in the memory of Dr Rustam Ranji - an Ophthalmologist par excellence and a committed Rotarian. The annual public lecture was delivered by prominent leader in eye care and vision science, Dr Sushmita Kaushik - Professor of Ophthalmology, Advanced Eye Centre, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education & Research, Chandigarh. Dr. Kaushik spoke on the topic 'Childhood Glaucoma – The Known, The Unknown'. I would like to thank Dr Kaushik and the Rotary club of Hyderabad for partnering with us and making us part of their initiative to keep the legacy and values of Dr Rustam Ranji alive.

New Partnerships

Gangadhar Prasad Kilaru, a plastic surgeon practicing in Fremont, California, and his wife Risha Kilaru extended their support to further strengthen and scale up the Ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive service at the Kallam Anji Reddy campus in Hyderabad. In recognition of their support and to honor Risha's parents, the service is named as Hariram Motumal Nasta and Renu Hariram Nasta Ophthalmic Plastic surgery centre. Please join me in thanking Risha, Gangadhar and the Kilaru family for their continued support.

Anniversary

Five years ago, we forged a partnership with BostonSight, USA for manufacturing specialty lenses for treating complex corneal and ocular surface diseases (PROSE and SCLERAL lenses) and created a dedicated LVPEI-BostonSight Lens manufacturing facility at our Gullapalli Pratibha Rao campus in Kismatpur, Hyderabad. The objective of this partnership was to make the speciality-contact lenses available at an affordable cost for patients and eye care practitioners across India. In the month of September, the facility completed five years of its operations. An ISO 13485-certified facility by the British Standards Institute, it is the only such facility in India and second in the world. Over the last 5 years, 9000 lenses have been manufactured at this facility. Close to 45% were dispensed within the LVPEI network (with 20% at no cost to underprivileged patients) and 55% were distributed to over 100 practitioners across India, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, and Ghana.



Eye Donation Fortnight

A series of activities were organized across the LVPEI network to mark the Eye Donation Fortnight (August 25-September 8) – a two-week program for spreading awareness about the need for eye donation in combating corneal blindness.

Dhrupad Varshotsav

LVPEI actively promotes all forms of art. We have a dedicated art gallery in the KAR campus and art works are displayed at prominent places on all our campuses. Besides, we also host music festivals to promote Indian music. In September, LVPEI hosted the Dhrupad Varshotsav, a classical Hindustani musical event, presented by the Dhrupad Gurukulam Foundation, at KAR campus. Music lovers thronged the newly renovated auditorium to enjoy this musical event. I would like to thank Mrs Vijaya Ramam for facilitating the event and reconnecting all of us with rhythm – the essence of life.

Let me end this newsletter with Dr Adeline Shona Lasrado, one of our Ophthalmology trainees, and her experience of our training program. Dr Lasrado was posted at our secondary centres in Thoodukurthy, Kothur and Paloncha, in Telangana. She describes her stint there as a 'one-of-its-kind learning experience' and a true accomplishment. She says, "Initially I was very sceptical about how I will manage a year of my posting at the secondary centres, away from home, in a completely new environment and culture. But, having completed it, it now feels nothing less than an accomplishment. The variety of cases I got to see, guidance from our mentor faculty, the visiting speciality faculty and the staff at the centre, together have greatly helped me become a more confident ophthalmologist. Among my forever-cherished memories will be the beautiful and thankful smiles of the patients who benefited from our services."

-Prashant Garg