



## September 2016 at LVPEI

Nature seems to be testing our resilience! Last year it was the super cyclone "Hudhud" in the city of Visakhapatnam, home of one of our tertiary centres; and this month it was the severe torrential rains that caused major floods in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana where most of our centres are located. The eighteen month old Edward and Shona Brown Centre, our secondary centre in Guntur district, had to face the onslaught of a major flood due to a major breach from a nearby lake, caused by incessant rains for several days. The entire ground floor was under water which took several hours to recede. The spirit of "togetherness" came to the fore with the entire team at the centre, ably supported by the teams from our other centres nearby, and from Hyderabad, working non-stop to make the centre operational again in just four days. Right from the first minute of flooding and throughout this episode, the team was single-mindedly focused on keeping the patients safe and secure, demonstrating top most priority to the value of "patient first". The spirit of teamwork, combined with the able support of our technical and IT teams, made this possible. Thanks to each of them for this heroic effort in overcoming this major threat.

Five more primary care vision centres were added to our network this month, in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. The capital grant for the equipment was provided by "OneSight Foundation" and the physical space was obtained through local community support.

Yet another week long annual session for the residents from across the country, Eye-PEP 2016, was organised with 175 participants. Didactic and interactive sessions covering all important areas of ophthalmology and eye care were part of this course. This course is much appreciated across the country, generating greater demand. Now several other organizations have begun to replicate this. This exposure to the frontiers of ophthalmology has helped many to make their career choices more easily, with several of them ending up joining our fellowships and faculty ultimately. Igniting young minds and showing them a direction was part of our vision for this course.

India celebrated the "Eye Donation Fortnight" ending early this month. All the four eye banks in our network organised events to expand the donor base as well as to enhance public awareness. The newly initiated "Hospital Cornea Retrieval Programme" in the city of Vijayawada is performing well with 26 corneas donated during this month. This is very encouraging given the almost negligible numbers earlier. This growth is a big boost to the corneal transplantation volumes under our Tej Kohli Cornea Institute (TKCI), with the corneas being distributed to both our TKCI team as well as to other surgeons across the country.

We had yet another session of "Low Vision Awareness Programme" for eye care professionals. 39 participants from across the country were exposed to the concepts and practices of low vision care. This novel concept initiated by our team many years ago led to the starting of low vision services in several places across the country, an area which is often neglected.



We had our share of awards and honors, both national and international, with many of our colleagues receiving well deserved recognitions. I offer my congratulations to each of them.

Finally, it was a great moment of joy to see our Institute ranked as "No.1" among the eye hospitals of India. This coming on top of the "Best Optometry School" ranking, and the record for the highest publications among single specialty institutions over the past decade, certainly made it a special year. While top ranking certainly sounds good, more important is the significance of it - indeed we are practicing our founding value of "Excellence". This together with our permanent commitment to provide high quality, comprehensive eye care to over 3000 villages with permanent facilities, well trained human resources (the largest such integrated eye care system anywhere for the underprivileged), is a symbol of our other founding value of "Equity". A clear demonstration of the strong foundation on which our Institute was built, and something to celebrate on our 30th Foundation Day, on October 17th!

- Gullapalli N Rao