



infocus

FOR A BETTER TOMORROW



MAY 2012

Cataract
Research

Fellowships

FOSH
Turns 50!

How the money
was spent

Launch of the Sydney Eye Hospital DVD!

Over the last year, the Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation has been working on producing quality DVDs for patients of the Sydney Eye Hospital.

These DVDs will explain some of the more common forms of eye surgery such as Cataract, Glaucoma, Corneal Grafting, Retinal Surgery and Oculoplastic Surgery. They will provide easy to understand information on the procedure and what is required prior to coming in for surgery, the procedure itself and post operative care.

The DVDs' purpose is to create an awareness of specific eye conditions and to provide information on the surgical procedure and the processes around attending the Sydney Eye Hospital for surgery. The goal is to provide patients with the information to allow them to make informed choices and work in partnership with the surgeons towards the best outcome.

The Foundation is excited to announce that the DVDs will be readily available through volunteer groups located within hospitals, all ophthalmic practices and GP's after its launch later this year. The cost will be \$5 each or \$20 for the set.



A LETTER OF APPRECIATION

I needed to undergo surgery when a hole in my retina led to poor central vision. The surgery was performed by Dr Alex Hunyor and Dr Gurmit Uppal (the current Vitreoretinal Fellow from Moorfields Eye Hospital in London, UK).

The surgery, performed from within the eye, involved closing the retinal hole and supporting it with gas injected into the eye at the end of the operation.

Following surgery, regular drops were required and as the gas was naturally absorbed, my vision improved with an exceptional result. My grateful thanks to all supporting staff on 8th March 2012. A thank you card was written to Dr Hunyor and his team.

Very few patients really focus on the arrangements and expertise involved.

Grateful thanks again.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Mary Ruth Murray

**If you have a story to tell, please let us know.
We would love to hear from you!**

Cataract Research Continuing

Thanks to Funding from the Foundation

In 2009, Dr Lucy Dawes, a very promising postdoctoral researcher at the University of East Anglia UK, was awarded a prestigious Endeavour Fellowship from the Australian Government to carry out collaborative work at the Save Sight Institute (SSI) in Sydney with Professor John McAvoy's cataract research group.



This was planned to be a six-month project after which Dr Dawes would return to the UK. However, the preliminary results were so exciting, and Dr Dawes' contribution so critical for the ongoing success of the project, that all efforts were focused on finding a way to keep her at SSI.

Unfortunately, she was too late to apply for support from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and other major granting bodies. Just when Dr Dawes was getting ready to pack her bags, the Sydney

Eye Hospital Foundation provided her with a grant to continue her studies and research at SSI.

With this support, the work went ahead in 'leaps and bounds' and provided the platform for the team to win ongoing funding from NHMRC (Australia) and the National Institute of Health (USA). Successful grant awards from these bodies have allowed Dr Dawes to have support for the next 3 years to continue her groundbreaking cataract research work.

The Project

Dr Dawes has been part of a team that is working towards finding ways of promoting lens regeneration after cataract surgery. With approximately 20 million people affected, cataract is the most common cause of blindness in the world today.

Currently the most effective treatment for cataract is surgery, which involves removal of opaque cellular material and insertion of a plastic intraocular lens into the remaining capsular bag. Although initially very effective in restoring sight, a secondary cataract, commonly known as Posterior Capsular Opacification (PCO), can develop. This is caused by unusual growth of the epithelial cells that remain attached to the lens capsule. These surviving cells undergo an epithelial mesenchymal transition and form scar tissue that progressively obscures vision.

Although further surgical treatment can restore some visual sharpness, it is not without risk of serious complications, particularly in children, and adds further costs to what is the most common surgical procedure carried out in Western countries.

In recent decades, the main drive of research to prevent PCO has been directed at eliminating these troublesome

cells; however, they have proven to be very resilient and so far no removal strategy has been effective, or without serious complications.

Now taking a refreshingly new approach, Dr Dawes and the cataract research team at SSI want to exploit their ability to survive – rather than trying to kill them – and promote their normal growth so that they regenerate normal lens tissue. The team has made tremendous progress in their research and are currently working to produce similar outcomes in human tissue as they have achieved in model tissue.

Results from these studies will provide the blueprint for promoting the regeneration of functional lenses after cataract surgery.

“Winning these fiercely competitive international grants to support Dr Dawes and progress this work would not have been possible without the support of the Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation,” states Professor McAvoy. “We are indebted to the Foundation for timely support for this project – through this we continue to make progress towards achieving our long-term goal of minimising the burden of cataract surgery.”

Current Fellowships *at Sydney Eye Hospital*

The Foundation funds a number of Fellowships involving the following specialist units: **Retinal, Glaucoma, Corneal, Oculoplastics, Intra-Ocular Implant and Professorial Clinical Fellowship with the Save Sight Institute.**

Candidates (Eye Doctors) for these Fellowships come from overseas. Each position is for 12 months and includes a research component. Sydney Eye Hospital benefits in many ways from these programmes, including clinical research and publication both nationally and internationally. Sydney Eye Hospital is a teaching hospital and has a continuing programme in place to teach qualified doctors to become Eye Specialists. These Registrars benefit in their training from the availability of already qualified Eye Doctors who are engaged full time for the period of their Fellowship. Some of these Fellows are from third world countries and return to their country with their skills improved from their 12 months in this fully operational Eye Hospital.

The current Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation Fellows are as follows:

Dr Alexandros S. Ioannidis – Corneal Fellow

Originally from Greece, Dr Ioannidis completed his specialist registrar training at Moorfields Eye Hospital in the UK. Together with the corneal consultants, he deals with patients with various corneal ailments from infection, inflammation, genetic or degenerative causes. Patients requiring corneal transplants are also managed by the corneal team. Dr Ioannidis has had a great experience in the last 12 months and has enjoyed his time in Sydney.



Dr Ee Ling Ang – Graham Lovett Vitreoretinal Fellow

Dr Ee Ling Ang trained in Vitreoretinal surgery at Penang Hospital, Malaysia. She will return to Malaysia in February, after a year of comprehensive training in medical and surgical retinal diseases in Sydney Eye Hospital, to run the Vitreoretinal Unit at Penang Hospital.



Dr Gurmit Uppal – Dr Eddy Donaldson Vitreoretinal Fellow

An ophthalmologist from Moorfields Eye Hospital in London, Dr Uppal has a special interest in vitreoretinal surgery, age related macular degeneration, and stem cell therapies for retinal disease. He has a background in biochemistry and



molecular genetics and completed his medical degree at the Royal Free Hospital, University of London. Thereafter, he completed a postgraduate medical doctorate degree examining novel surgical approaches for macular disease based at Moorfields Eye Hospital and the Institute of Ophthalmology (University College London). Having completed his ophthalmic training in London, he has spent the year at Sydney Eye Hospital gaining further experience in treating a broad range of medical and surgical retinal disorders, with particular attention to current vitreoretinal surgical techniques. On return to the UK, he will undertake a second fellowship in vitreoretinal surgery at Moorfields Eye Hospital. He is a keen sailor and football player and plays for the North Ryde soccer team.

Dr Simon Rogers – Oculoplastic Fellow

A UK based Ophthalmologist, Dr Rogers completed his basic medical training at St Mary's Hospital Medical School, London in 1999. He undertook his specialist ophthalmic training at Southampton University Hospital, where he developed an interest in oculoplastic surgery. During his year at the Sydney Eye Hospital, he has developed his experience and surgical techniques in all aspects of oculoplastic surgery with specific attention in the management of eyelid and orbital tumours and endoscopic lacrimal surgery. On returning to the UK he will start a consultant post at the Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth. During his time in Sydney he has thrown himself into the Aussie lifestyle, becoming a member of the North Bondi Soft Sand Harriers and participating in ocean swims.



Dr Gustavo Muradas Reis – Glaucoma Fellow

Dr. Reis completed his specialist registrar training in Brazil at the Santa Casa de Misericordia Hospital. He has also completed a round year as a Glaucoma Fellow with Prof. Felicio Silva, a recognised Glaucoma specialist in Brazil. Dr Reis expects to enhance his studies from the qualified staff attached to the Glaucoma Unit of the Sydney Eye Hospital and upgrade his clinical and surgical skills and carry out some useful research and development.



FOSH Turns 50!



The Friends of Sydney Hospital (FOSH) have been providing patients with the highest standards of care since 1962 and have contributed more than \$3 million in donations and services to the hospital since it was formed. That's an extraordinary contribution by an extraordinary group of volunteers!

Just like our donors, each and every member and supporter of the Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation plays a role in helping to preserve the gift of sight. Your support helps to provide vital extra funding for this exceptional hospital, and the remarkable eye doctors who give the gift of sight to patients from all walks of life.

By making a donation today, you will do even more to help provide the best possible eye care to people of NSW and beyond.

Leaving a Lasting Legacy

The gift of sight is such a wonderful thing. Most of the time we take our eyesight for granted, but when something happens and we lose it, we realise what a real gift sight is.

We would like you to let us know if you are considering leaving a lasting legacy by including Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation in your Will.

If you would like more information about leaving a bequest, please tick the Bequest box on the enclosed coupon or contact the Foundation on (02) 9382 7408 or bequest@seh.org.au.

How the money was spent in 2011

Over the years, the Foundation has managed to provide more than \$9 million for the benefit of Sydney Eye Hospital, which in turn benefits many thousands of public patients attending the hospital every year. With the help of our loyal supporters, we have assisted with the building of the new Eye Hospital in Macquarie Street, purchased state-of-the-art equipment and funded numerous research projects into the prevention of blindness.

Today, more than ever, with demand increasing and government funding always under pressure, your generous support is vital to ensuring that the Sydney Eye Hospital can continue to provide the excellent eye care that it has done for some 130 years.

Clinical Fellowships

Graham Lovett Vitreoretinal Fellowship	\$39,847
Dr. Eddie Donaldson Vitreoretinal Fellowship	\$18,993
Corneal Fellowship	\$38,559
Glaucoma Fellowship	\$41,574
Oculoplastic Fellowship	\$22,631
Intraocular Implant Fellowship	\$12,136

Research

Save Sight Institute Post - Graduate Research Scholarship	\$12,500
Keratoconus Research Grant	\$95,000
Post Doctoral Cataract Research Fellowship	\$106,745

Grants

Nurses Grant including Orthoptists	\$10,320
Eye Operations DVD Grant	\$70,102

Total **\$468,407**

YES! I Proudly Support the Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation



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Bequests Planned Giving (eg: monthly) Volunteering

I have already included Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation in my Will

Thank you for your generosity.

All cheques and money orders to be made payable to: SYDNEY EYE HOSPITAL FOUNDATION.