

ROY'S RETINA WAS PEELING AWAY LIKE WALLPAPER

Your donations helped
save his sight

When Roy Bishop discovered that "the world was getting very dark" he initially put off getting it checked out. Once he did though he found himself on a fast-track – time was of the essence.

"My optometrist sent me to an ophthalmologist who said, You have to go to the hospital right now." He was admitted on a Friday evening and operated on the very next morning.

"Roy's ophthalmologist noticed a wrinkle on the retina," says the doctor who performed the surgery, Zaid Mammo. "She referred him with retinal detachment and specifically something called a giant retinal tear."

Dr Mammo comes from Vancouver, Canada. He was at Sydney Eye Hospital as the Dr Eddie Donaldson Vitreoretinal Fellow, one of eight Fellowships funded by the Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation every year.

"The retina sits like a wallpaper on the inside of the eye," says Dr Mammo. "Unfortunately for Roy, there's a big tear in his retina and fluid started to go under the retina and caused a retinal detachment. Just like wallpaper when it gets wet it starts to peel off the wall. Almost half of Roy's retina was torn apart."

The situation was urgent, often the case with detached retina. Roy had decisions to make, and quickly. "Every minute mattered. I have to say I appreciated Dr Mammo's calmness.

"There was no panic or flurry about it. It was just very succinct: this is the situation, here are your choices..."

"... we can do surgery and can achieve this but it might not work. Or you can leave it as it is, then the macula, the centre of vision will be affected and you will lose the sight in that eye." Roy adds, "The surgery process was very smooth and not problematic at all."



Fellows help with patient diagnosis, registrar training and surgery.

The operation happens in stages. A heavy liquid is pumped inside the eye, then a laser is used to reattach the retina. Roy explains, "I had to lie flat on my back at home for a week, and got used to listening to podcasts because there was not much else I could do." Meanwhile the heavy liquid helps hold the retina against the back of the eye while the laser-work heals. A week later the surgeons drain the fluid and replace it with gas, and then over a period of time the eye's natural vitreous fluid returns to the eye.

Worldwide, outcomes are on the poorer side for similar cases, according to Dr Mammo. "There's a high risk of scarring and recurrent retinal detachments."

So what makes the difference at Sydney Eye

Hospital? It's related to prioritising patient care above all, by everyone at the Eye Hospital.

"That makes a big difference in outcomes, in terms of the retina but also for their own sense of well-being and feeling cared for. Roy mentioned me by name but there's a big team of people that make processes work. Starting in the emergency room, to the ward, clinics and operating theatres. Everyone is working together to make sure the patients are cared for in a compassionate and timely fashion." The Fellowship has been part of that, says Zaid.

"The amount of knowledge and skill that I've picked up this year – I'm not sure any other year in my life that I will learn so much. It's a privilege and an honour to be able to help that many patients.

"One of my big passions is teaching and passing things on and kind of paying it forward. I'm actively involved in teaching surgery during our usual working hours. I keep telling the registrars, 'You're so lucky to be part of this hospital and do your training here.'"



Dr Zaid Mammo

Roy is happy to reveal that he's made a donation to the Fellowship program as a result.

"I'm so lucky to live in a country where we have this service. I didn't have to be wealthy to get that treatment when it was needed, I didn't have to run in circles, wait months for something that really needed to happen quickly, to happen quickly.

"You realize how tentative, how fragile all those things are."

Zaid makes the same point. "I just hope the opportunity continues, the support continues, for many years and more generations because I think people don't speak about how much learning and how much contribution this place offers to the Fellows ... And how much they give back as well."

Help us today to support the Fellowship program.

A donation enables these experienced doctors, from here and overseas, to develop new skills as well as pass on their not inconsiderable skills to clinicians at the Eye Hospital. Not to mention doing sophisticated research in an extraordinary time for eye medicine.

DOUBLE FELLOWSHIP IS “WORTH IT”

“It’s very busy. I do clinic every day, and operate once a week, and I’m doing macular research,” says Dr Elisa Cornish.

Every Sydney Eye Hospital Fellowship is a full-on undertaking. Fellows attend clinics, conduct surgeries, meet patients, do research, train resident doctors and do on calls. So why did Elisa Cornish take up a 2nd Fellowship straight after her first?

“The first Fellowship, the Professorial, was a broad specialist experience. I got to hang out with ALL the professors and their teams, I got to see how the profs interact with patients. But I wanted to dive more deeply into my own area, Medical Retina. I wanted to know more.”

Dr Cornish thinks this is an extraordinary time in eye science. “So many new ideas and operations are on the horizon. There are diseases

that we can offer almost no treatment for, like LCA [Leber congenital amaurosis] – but with new gene therapies, that all looks like changing. There are implants, stem cells, new drugs being tried, all which show promising treatments to patients. I want to be part of that wave. I’m so grateful the

Foundation makes these Fellowships available, I hope the people who donate realise how much they’re contributing to the future of eye health in this country.”



Dr Elisa Cornish

Elisa’s Medical Retina Fellowship finishes in July. “But I’ll still be at Sydney Eye Hospital. I love the work there. There’s more patient time, it’s more personable, and the extra training means a higher level of care.

“I really enjoy it when a patient sees an improvement and they realise that that came from care provided by the whole hospital, nurses, staff, doctors. That’s the feedback I love.”

NOW FOR THE LIGHTS

We’re so close to our brilliant new surgery!

Since December the Foundation has been fundraising for equipment to revamp one of our operating theatres. The response has been tremendous and some of the gear is already in use. Dr Peter Martin told us that “the first case involving the Stealth Navigation System ... went without problems and demonstrated why the Stealth has achieved its reputation.”

The last items on our wish-list for the OR are the new lights: brilliant lights that can be moved easily by one hand, give instant illumination and avoid shadows over the work zone.

The difference to the patient is – more effective surgery, faster results, less time on the table, more patients treated. We won’t bore you with the dollar amounts (OK, it’s \$60,000). We’d love to have the lights up and running in the next couple of months. Please do consider a contribution.



Brilliant lights and a better use of space will seriously improve the theatre.

HOW TO DONATE...

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 **MAIL** Post the completed form below to
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You can give the gift of sight

- A visiting Fellow in ocular oncology.
- A better source of radiation treatment.
- A state-of-the-art operating theatre.
- The latest & best equipment.

These are fund-raising goals of the Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation, all making a difference to the patients and doctors of the Hospital.

Your dollars are gifts – and in the end those gifts boil down to one thing – the gift of sight. Old or young, rich or poor, the Sydney Eye Hospital delivers extraordinary benefits to people in Australia and across the world.

Not everyone has the means to gift significant sums. Every dollar counts and is appreciated.

A bequest is your personal legacy to the future.

You can make provisions in your will to ensure that money, property or valuables from your estate are donated to the cause of your choice. It's a good idea to contact us first to make sure the instructions in your will are clear.

Your "delayed gift" can be an effective way to save the sight of thousands each year, buy crucial equipment and help to train eye surgeons. If you'd like to investigate the possibility of donating through a bequest, check the box in the donation form below. You can also contact the Foundation on (02) 9382 7408 or email bequest@sehf.org.au.

The support is truly appreciated.

Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation Board of Management

All Members of the Board of Management are financial members of the Foundation. They also give their time freely in the interests of enhancing the ability of Sydney Eye Hospital to provide first class eye care to the public of Sydney and beyond.

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