Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences Newsletter

Issue Number 1 | March 2020

In this issue

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Head's Report

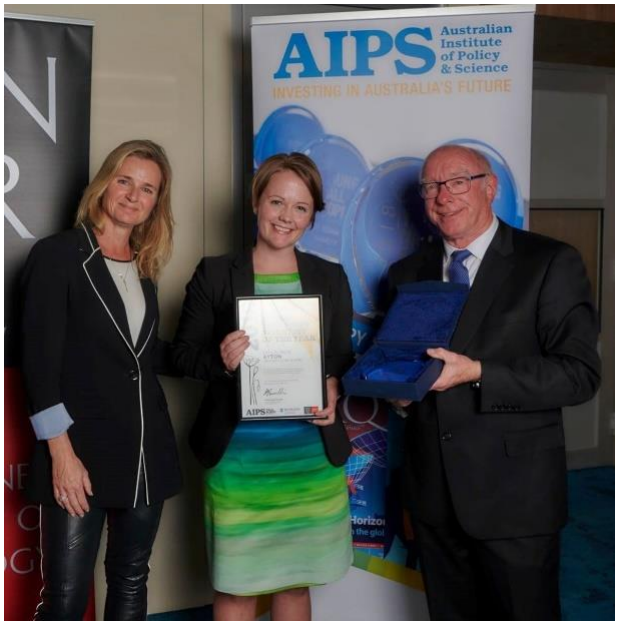
2020 has certainly commenced memorably. With a difficult start to the year with the bushfires, followed up closely by COVID-19, we are collectively experiencing challenges. We recognise that this is also the case for our alumni and friends, and that this can create complexity around support for our student placements, teaching, research and other activities. We thank you immensely for your support throughout this period, and encourage you to communicate with us early and often if you have queries regarding involvement in any of these activities.

Our OD4 and OD3 students commenced studies early in the year (January and February respectively) so are settled in and working hard. We have also welcomed onto campus our returning OD2s and new OD1 students, the future graduating class of 2023. As mentioned previously, 2023 is the 50th year anniversary of the formation of the University's Department of Optometry & Vision Sciences, and we have begun planning for a significant celebratory year.

We would also like to congratulate once again our graduating class of 2019. Pictured below are those that were in attendance at the Graduation ceremony on Tuesday December 17th. We hope that you are enjoying the beginning of your professional careers. We look forward to watching your future successes, and hearing from you about your experiences beyond university.

Department News

Victorian Tall Poppy of the Year Award



Congratulations to the Department's Dr Lauren Ayton who received the Victorian Tall Poppy of the Year award. The Tall Poppy Campaign recognises the achievements of Australian scientists through the prestigious annual Young Tall Poppy Science Awards and the biennial CSL Florey Medal.

Created in 1998 by the Australian Institute of Policy and Science (AIPS), the Tall Poppy Campaign aims to recognise and celebrate Australian intellectual and scientific excellence and to encourage younger Australians to follow in the footsteps of our outstanding achievers. The Tall Poppy Campaign has made significant achievements towards building a more publicly engaged scientific leadership in Australia.

Pictured right alongside Dr Ayton are Dr Sarah Meacham (Board Member (AIPS), former Tall Poppy, and immediate past chair of the Victorian Tall Poppy Selection Panel) and Professor Mark Hogarth (Burnet

Senior Principal Research Fellow, The Macfarlane Burnet Institute for Medical Research and Public Health Ltd and Chair of the Victorian Tall Poppy Selection Panel).

Melbourne School of Health Sciences Learning and Teaching Excellence Award

Congratulations to the Department's Dr Kwang Cham who was the recipient of the 2019 School of Health Sciences Learning and Teaching Excellence Award. Kwang is pictured left with David Rose (Director of Teaching and Learning, SHS).

Promotions

Hearty congratulations to Associate Professor Laura Downie and Associate Professor Anthea Cochrane on their recent and well-deserved promotions to Level D (Associate Professor). The rank of Associate Professor denotes exceptional distinction and achievements that are recognised nationally and internationally.

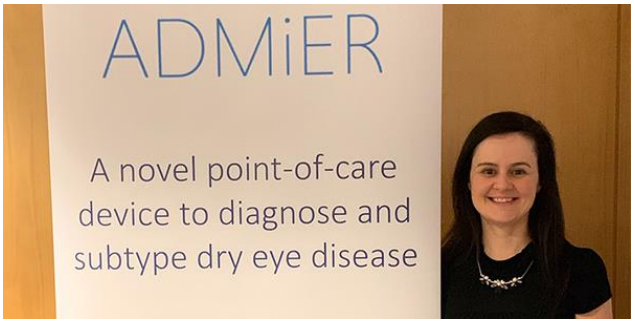
50-year anniversary

The Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences at Melbourne will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2023, and is asking former students to contribute stories, photos and other memorabilia to enable recognition of all 50 years of the Department of Optometry at the University. We are seeking optometrists to tell a brief story from each graduating class - one story per week for 50 weeks in 2023. Interested alumni can email stories, photos, copies of covers of student magazines, or student society t-shirts to Bang Bui at bvb@unimelb.edu.au or Allison McKendrick allisonm@unimelb.edu.au

50 OPTOMETRY AND VISION SCIENCES
50 years 1973—2023

ADMiER

Optometry and Vision Sciences at Melbourne optometrist Dr Laura Downie is leading a project to develop revolutionary point-of-care device that looks to be a game-changer in the diagnosis and sub-typing of dry eye disease.



Acoustically-Driven Microfluidic Extensional Rheometry (ADMiER) is the first-of-its-kind device, and will enable eye-care practitioners to gently take a patient's tear-drop and use it immediately in their practice to determine if the patient has dry eye and, if so, the sub-type of the disease. Laura recently received the 2019 American Academy of Optometry Foundation Korb-Exford award to help fund the project, in addition to an NHMRC Development Grant in 2019.

Student News

School of Health Sciences Research Colloquium

Well done to all of our Masters and PhD students for a range of excellent oral and poster presentations detailing the latest progress in their projects, at the School of Health Sciences Research Colloquium. Congratulations to Sena Gocuk (*Current optometric practices relating to age-related macular degeneration (AMD)*), Bing Dai (*Motion perception in infantile nystagmus*) and Anna van Koeverden (*Quantifying interaction between retinal ganglion cells and microglia*) for winning people choice awards. A diverse program was presented on the day, brilliantly organised entirely by students across Optometry, Nursing, Physiotherapy, Audiology and Speech pathology and Social Work.

Graduations

Congratulations to Dr Darren Zhao, on his PhD completion and on his publication showing that it is possible to reverse ganglion cell dysfunction if intraocular pressure lowering is initiated early enough. Well done to his supervisors Christine Nguyen, Algis Vingrys and Bang Bui and collaborators Vickie Wong, Andrew Jobling and Erica Fletcher.

Additional congratulations to Masters degree students Kirthana Senthil, Joe Wang, Anna Drayton and Jonathan Lay.

Kirthana, Joe Wang, Darren, Anna and Jonathan are pictured right.

Alumni

Reunion Tours

The Department will be holding its Reunion Tours in late 2020. Tours will be hosted for classes whose final years were 2010, 2000, 1990, and 1980. The tours provide an opportunity to visit the teaching, research and clinical facilities of the Department, to chat with current academic staff, and most importantly to catch up with your peers and see what has (or hasn't) changed. Specific details for the Reunion Tours will be provided in the near future. Please stay in touch with all alumni matters via:
https://healthsciences.unimelb.edu.au/engage/alumni/departments/optometry-alumni

Teaching Matters

Innovate Ed Success

The Department's Dr Kwang Cham and A/Professor Anthea Cochrane, along with A/Professor Kate Tregloan (Melbourne School of Design) and Iain Scott (IT Development), were successful in receiving funding to investigate how the feedback Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) ipad system they have developed for Optometry might be integrated into the learning management landscape at The University of Melbourne. Kwang will work with the Learning Environment team on this project during 2020.

Ways of Knowing in Healthcare– An Interprofessional Day

On 20 February 2020 the Faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health Sciences ran an interprofessional day that for the first time brought together 1st year Medicine and Physiotherapy students with 2nd year Nursing students and 3rd year Optometry students. The day focused on "Ways of Knowing in Healthcare" where students participated in conversations that explored interprofessional roles and First Nations health and wellbeing. It was great to see Optometry staff facilitating multi-disciplinary groups of students exploring questions relating to health and patient care, and for the role of the Optometrist in the interprofessional team to be explored.

Review of the OD program

Over the summer break, A/Professor Michael Pianta (OD Course coordinator) has been leading a review of the current Doctor of Optometry program to update the course and subject learning objectives to identify content gaps or areas of unnecessary overlap, and to ensure alignment between desired learning outcomes and assessment. This work ensures our course remains contemporary and relevant to current practice needs. The changes will be reflected in the 2021 Handbook of the University of Melbourne.

Inaugural Interprofessional Teaching Day at the University of Melbourne

In November 2019 a group of Optometry teachers joined clinical supervisors from across the Department of Health Sciences to learn about and discuss the provision of feedback to students in a clinical environment (pictured right). Eight educators from each of the disciplines of Nursing, Speech Pathology, Audiology, Optometry, Social Work and Physiotherapy met at the University to share best practice and ideas.

International Conference Presentations

Dr Kwang Cham attended and presented at the ASCILITE (Australian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education) conference in Singapore in December. A/Professor Anthea Cochrane attended and presented at the 3rd World Congress of Optometry in the United States of America in October. Attendance and presentation at conferences internationally allows the teaching program at the University of Melbourne to stay abreast of current developments in tertiary education, and allows the sharing their educational research ideas.

Seeing Beyond Lecture Series

October

On Wednesday the 2nd of October, Professor Keith Martin and Dr Lauren Ayton presented at the Department's *Seeing Beyond* Lecture Series. Thank you to all who attended (and rural practitioners who joined us online). Professor Martin and Dr. Ayton provided an excellent update on advances in gene therapy and clinical trials for patients with inherited retinal regenerations and glaucoma.

Seeing Beyond Lecture Series May 2020: Optometry toolbox: Future and current assessments of visual function for glaucoma

When: Wednesday 13th of May

Guest speakers: Professor Allison McKendrick and Dr. Flora Hui from the Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences

Times: 6.30pm – 8.00pm (please arrive at 6.00pm to sign in)

Location: Theatre 1 (B103) 207-221 Bouverie Street, The University of Melbourne (https://maps.unimelb.edu.au/parkville/building/379)

CPD points: 6 CPD points

Presenter Biographies and Presentation Summaries

Dr Flora Hui

Flora completed her Bachelor of Optometry at the University of Melbourne, and her Masters and PhD studies in the same Department. She spent a few years at the Centre for Eye Research Australia, focusing on shortening the timeframe to detect glaucoma progression in the clinic and how we can use the retina as a biomarker for other neurodegenerative diseases. Flora has a keen interest in advancing clinical tools for ocular diseases, such as glaucoma, to improve patient outcomes.

Glaucoma: Can ganglion cells improve in function? And how would we measure it?

Glaucoma has classically been thought of as a one-way street, where retinal ganglion cells slowly die, and patients lose vision. But what we've discovered, is that there may be critical timepoints at which ganglion cells can survive, and potentially thrive again if the stressors from glaucoma are relieved. Here, we'll explore the findings, from mouse to clinic, to see if we can detect changes to how ganglion cells function and whether they can be supported despite disease.

Professor Allison McKendrick

Allison is Head of the Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences at the University of Melbourne. She has wide-ranging research interests in both ophthalmic and neurological conditions. Her research lab has applied aims including: the development of better clinical tests for the assessment of vision loss, determining methods of earlier detection of vision loss, and improving the understanding of the consequences of vision loss on performance in natural visual environments and day-to-day tasks. Allison's research program is highly collaborative with colleagues from ophthalmology, psychology, physiotherapy, neurology and neuroimaging.

Perimetry: what patients actually think about it, and why patient opinion really matters.

Measuring visual field status is essential for glaucoma diagnosis and management. Anecdotally, both patient and operator experience of visual field testing can be negative. But, beyond anecdote, what do people who regularly undergo perimetry really think about visual field assessment, and what would they like to see improved? To find this out, we conducted a survey, distributed via Glaucoma Australia, to get first-hand information regarding experience and preferences with visual field testing. Here we will explore the results of the survey, which reveals some simple strategies to improve patient experience in your practice.

Melbourne Eyecare Clinic (MEC, formally UMeyecare)

Since the newsletter report last year, some things have changed in the clinic and some things are the same. All our final year students graduated at end of 2019 and so we are welcoming a fresh set of OD4s into the clinic. Each new group that we welcome brings with them different sets of skills, challenges and rewards. At the beginning of the year, MEC's three principal Clinical Teaching Instructors (CTIs), Tim Martin, Maria Bui, Joe Wang and myself (Daryl Guest) sit down to map out what we should concentrate on with the new cohort entering clinical placements at MEC. As well as the usual reinforcement of clinical skills with patients, we have been trying to get the students to be able to present their clinical finding in a more logical, interactive and time efficient way. We are using the model of ISBAR (Identify, Situation, Background, Assessment and Recommendation) as a guide. The students are trying to improve this important skill of presenting clinical findings, and we are seeing improvement.

As happens all too frequently in building projects, the previously-announced move of the clinic to 200 Berkeley Street has been delayed. We are likely to be moving after Easter. The new layout and some of the consulting rooms fit out is looking very good as we are moving from design to prototypes. It will be sad to leave the space that has served us well, but the MEC staff are looking forward to having an even more functional layout and to being in much better proximity to the rest of the Department.

The main challenge for the clinic in the early part of this year has been COVID-19. By the time you read this, the literature will have further evolved. We have been able to take the students along with us on this journey. The students have been delving into the literature, evaluating the responses from Government and eyecare organisations, and learning how to apply an evolving, sometimes contradictory, knowledge base to the safe running of a large primary-care clinic.

Publications

DOVS publications appearing in PubMed over the September 2019 - February 2020 period

An update on retinal prostheses.

Ayton LN, Barnes N, Dagnelie G, Fujikado T, Goetz G, Hornig R, Jones BW, Muqit MMK, Rathbun DL, Stingl K, Weiland JD, Petoe MA.

Clin Neurophysiol. 2019 Dec 10. pii: S1388-2457(19)31326-4.

> *This invited review provides an overview of the latest state-of-the-art advances in retinal prostheses ("bionic eyes"), with authorship from international leaders in the field.*

Imaging relative stasis of the blood column in human retinal capillaries.

Bedggood P, Metha A.

Biomed Opt Express. 2019 Nov 1;10(11):6009-6028.

> *We describe a retinal imaging method to identify departures from regular capillary flow such as low haematocrit, cell aggregates, and/or very slow flow. Such events disrupt capillary exchange and may be precursors to disease.*

Adaptive optics imaging of the retinal microvasculature.

Bedggood P, Metha A.

Clin Exp Optom. 2020 Jan;103(1):112-122.

> *We summarise the current state of the art, and body of knowledge stemming from, high resolution imaging of the retinal microvasculature with adaptive optics.*

Geometry of the Retinal Nerve Fibers From Emmetropia Through to High Myopia at Both the Temporal Raphe and Optic Nerve.

Bedggood P, Mukherjee S, Nguyen BN, Turpin A, McKendrick AM.

Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci. 2019 Nov 1;60(14):4896-4903.

> *We used high resolution optical coherence tomography to determine how retinal nerve fiber trajectories and distribution may be altered in myopia as a result of retinal stretch.*

Impacts of older age on the temporal properties of collinear facilitation.

Chan YM, Brooks CJ, McKendrick AM.

J Vis. 2019 Dec 2;19(14):5.

> *The study explored how older age effects spatial vision, to determine the neural processing stage impacted. This publication arises from a MSHS Early Career Researcher Grant awarded to Janet Chan.*

An artificial tear containing flaxseed oil for treating dry eye disease: A randomized controlled trial.

Downie LE, Hom MM, Berdy GJ, El-Harazi S, Verachtert A, Tan J, Liu H, Carlisle-Wilcox C, Simmons P, Vehige J.

Ocul Surf. 2020 Jan;18(1):148-157.

> *This clinical trial supports the use of a nano-emulsion artificial tear (OM3, Allergan), a novel preservative-free nano-emulsion formulation with trehalose and flaxseed oil (omega-3s), for treating dry eye disease.*

Omega-3 and omega-6 polyunsaturated fatty acids for dry eye disease.

Downie LE, Ng SM, Lindsley KB, Akpek EK.

Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2019 Dec 18;12:CD011016.

> *This systematic review, involving data from 34 randomised trials, finds a possible role for long-chain omega-3 supplementation in managing dry eye disease, although the evidence is uncertain and inconsistent.*

Non-invasive in vivo hyperspectral imaging of the retina for potential biomarker use in Alzheimer's disease.

Hadoux X, Hui F, Lim JKH, Masters CL, Pébay A, Chevalier S, Ha J, Loi S, Fowler CJ, Rowe C, Villemagne VL, Taylor EN, Fluke C, Soucy JP, Lesage F, Sylvestre JP, Rosa-Neto P, Mathotaarachchi S, Gauthier S, Nasreddine ZS, Arbour JD, Rhéaume MA, Beaulieu S, Dirani M, Nguyen CTO, Bui BV, Williamson R, Crowston JG, van Wijngaarden P.

Nat Commun. 2019 Sep 17;10(1):4227.

> *This study describes non-invasive retinal imaging using a wide range of visible narrow band wavelengths that helps to discriminate between individuals with and without moderate–high brain Aβ burden.*

Optometry Australia's chairside reference for the diagnosis and management of age-related macular degeneration.

Hart KM, Abbott C, Ly A, Kalff S, Lek JJ, Milston R, Page G, Robertson B, Ayton L. Clin Exp Optom. 2019 Sep 30. doi: 10.1111/cxo.12964.

> *This clinical practice guide was collated by the Age-Related Macular Degeneration Expert Working Group, for Optometry Australia. It covers recommendations for diagnosis, management and referral of AMD.*

Hybrid diamond/ carbon fiber microelectrodes enable multimodal electrical/chemical neural interfacing.

Hejazi MA, Tong W, Stacey A, Soto-Breceda A, Ibbotson MR, Yunzab M, Maturana MI, Almasi A, Jung YJ, Sun S, Meffin H, Fang J, Stamp MEM, Ganesan K, Fox K, Rifai A, Nadarajah A, Falahatdoost S, Prawer S, Apollo NV, Garrett DJ.

Biomaterials. 2020 Feb;230:119648. doi: 10.1016/j.biomaterials.2019.119648.

For years neuroscientists have used metal electrodes to record data from brains. We have developed a flexible carbon-based electrode that allows recording, stimulation and chemical sensing, with minimal damage.

Utility of Self-Destructing CRISPR/Cas Constructs for Targeted Gene Editing in the Retina.

Li F, Hung SSC, Mohd Khalid MKN, Wang JH, Chrysostomou V, Wong VHY, Singh V, Wing K, Tu L, Bender JA, Pébay A, King AE, Cook AL, Wong RCB, Bui BV, Hewitt AW, Liu GS.

Hum Gene Ther. 2019 Nov;30(11):1349-1360.

Continued gene editing with the CRISPR/Cas system can have unwanted side effects. Here we show that a "kamikaze" CRISPR/Cas that self-destructs after gene editing can be used in the retina.

Posttreatment Intervention With Lycium Barbarum Polysaccharides is Neuroprotective in a Rat Model of Chronic Ocular Hypertension.

Lakshmanan Y, Wong FSY, Zuo B, So KF, Bui BV, Chan HH.

Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci. 2019 Nov 1;60(14):4606-4618.

Wolf berry (Lycium Barbarum), from the same family as the golgi berry has antioxidant properties. Here we show in a model of glaucoma that Lycium Barbarum has neuroprotective properties.

Contrast discrimination under task-induced mental load.

Mahjoob M, Anderson AJ.

Vision Res. 2019 Dec;165:84-89.

Task-induced mental load can potentially degrade visual performance, which could be important during tasks such as driving. We find concurrently performing a demanding auditory task significantly impairs contrast discrimination.

Meibomian gland dropout is associated with immunodeficiency at HIV diagnosis: Implications for dry eye disease.

Nguyen BN, Chung AW, Lopez E, Silvers J, Kent HE, Kent SJ, Downie LE.

Ocul Surf. 2020 Feb 18. pii: S1542-0124(20)30022-7. doi: 10.1016/j.jtos.2020.02.003.

We found people infected with HIV have increased meibomian gland dropout that is associated with less immune cells at diagnosis, which may predispose to more prevalent dry eye disease in this population.

Ageing elevates peripheral spatial suppression of motion regardless of divided attention.

Park S, Nguyen BN, McKendrick AM.

Ophthalmic Physiol Opt. 2020 Feb 20. doi: 10.1111/opo.12674. [Epub ahead of print]

Older adults need longer than younger people to correctly identify the motion direction of objects in peripheral vision. This effect may explain some aspects of visual difficulty in older age.

Interventions to Mitigate Cognitive Biases in the Decision Making of Eye Care Professionals: A Systematic Review.

Shlonsky A, Featherston R, Galvin KL, Vogel AP, Granger CL, Lewis C, Luong ML, Downie LE.

Optom Vis Sci. 2019 Nov;96(11):818-824.

This systematic review finds a lack of research studies investigating interventions for mitigating cognitive biases associated with clinical decision making by eye care professionals, highlighting a need for research in this area.

Are current ophthalmology clinical practices relating to blue light-filtering intraocular lenses evidence-based?

Singh S, Anderson AJ, Watson SL, Downie LE.

Clin Exp Ophthalmol. 2020 Jan;48(1):125-127.

We surveyed Australian ophthalmologist and found blue light-filtering IOLs may be commonly recommended by cataract surgeons, with respondents' knowledge and attitude towards these lenses being mostly consistent with the best-available research evidence.

Corneal Epithelial "Neuromas": A Case of Mistaken Identity?

Stepp MA, Pal-Ghosh S, Downie LE, Zhang AC, Chinnery HR, Machet J, Di Girolamo N.

Cornea. 2020 Feb 28. doi: 10.1097/ICO.0000000000002294.

The term "neuroma" is becoming popular to describe nerve abnormalities in human corneas. Here, we argue that these "pathological" structures may be physiological entry sites where corneal stromal nerves penetrate the epithelium.

Improved visual acuity using a retinal implant and an optimized stimulation strategy.

Tong W, Stamp M, Apollo NV, Ganesan K, Meffin H, Prawer S, Garrett DJ, Ibbotson MR.

J Neural Eng. 2019 Dec 23;17(1):016018.

Electrical stimulation of the brain or retina can be rather imprecise due to the spread of current. We developed new electrode shapes and optimised algorithms that restrict current spread.

Potential mechanisms of retinal ganglion cell type-specific vulnerability in glaucoma.

Wang AY, Lee PY, Bui BV, Jobling AI, Greferath U, Brandli A, Dixon MA, Findlay Q, Fletcher EL, Vessey KA.

Clin Exp Optom. 2019 Dec 15. doi: 10.1111/cxo.13031.

There is growing evidence that not all subtypes of retinal ganglion cells are equally susceptible to glaucoma. Why this might be the case is discussed in this review.

Experience-dependent development of visual sensitivity in larval zebrafish.

Xie J, Jusuf PR, Bui BV, Goodbourn PT.

Sci Rep. 2019 Dec 12;9(1):18931.

We show that development of visual sensitivity in larval zebrafish is primarily driven by exposure to light and form, even in the absence of the explicit stimulus motion.

Correspondence Between Behavioral, Physiological, and Anatomical Measurements of Visual Function in Inhibitory Neuron-Ablated Zebrafish.

Xie J, Goodbourn PT, Bui BV, Sztal TE, Jusuf PR.

Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci. 2019 Nov 1;60(14):4681-4690.

Removal of inhibitory during retinal development leads to hyperexcitability. We show that in addition to modulating visual signals, inhibitory neurons may be critical for maintaining retinal structure and organization.

Response of the Trilaminar Retinal Vessel Network to Intraocular Pressure Elevation in Rat Eyes.

Zhao D, He Z, Wang L, Fortune B, Lim JKH, Wong VHY, Nguyen CTO, Bui BV.

Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci. 2020 Feb 7;61(2):2.

> *In response to mild IOP elevation the intermediate and deep vascular plexi have a greater capacity for autoregulation. This has implications for understanding susceptibility of specific vascular layers to glaucoma.*

Reversibility of Retinal Ganglion Cell Dysfunction From Chronic IOP Elevation.

Zhao D, Wong VHY, Nguyen CTO, Jobling AI, Fletcher EL, Vingrys AJ, Bui BV.

Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci. 2019 Sep 3;60(12):3878-3886.

> *We show that if IOP lowering occur early enough the remaining retinal ganglion cell are able to upregulate, such that overall retinal function returns to normal.*

Opportunity for optometrists to participate in a study of new practice tools for age-related macular degeneration (AMD)

We are seeking Australian optometrists to volunteer for a study that is evaluating different clinical practice tools for managing AMD.

Optometrists will be required to complete a short online survey, complete some case study questions, participate in an educative workshop, and audit their clinical practices (involving the evaluation of clinical practice records for 10 patients with AMD, at two time points).

All data contributed to the project will be in a de-identified format and confidentiality will be strictly maintained.

There are no costs to participate. The project has achieved CPD accreditation from Optometry Australia, with up to 10 Therapeutic CPD points available.

This study is being conducted by Sena Gocuk (M.Phil Candidate), Dr Laura Downie and Prof Allison McKendrick from the Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences, The University of Melbourne.

For further information please email Sena (sgocuk@student.unimelb.edu.au) or scan the QR code.

Up to 10T

The project is funded by a Macular Disease Foundation of Australia (MDFA) research grant and has been approved by the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee (#1851607).

UMOSS

2019

With our largest cohort yet and more events than ever, 2019 was a big year for UMOSS, and no UMOSS year is complete without our annual Eyeball. 2019's Eyeball was a smashing success with a very original 'Carn-eye-val' theme, filling the Grand Hyatt Ballroom with a rainbow of colours, balloons and confetti canons. We then packed our ballgowns and bowties away and picked up our spatulas for our annual World Sight Day bake sale. The entire cohort continued their reputation for generosity and love of cake, helping us raise $1500 for Optometry Giving Sight's World Sight day challenge. Once the icing sugar had settled, all the students buckled down for exams with the last UMOSS event for 2019 well in their sights: the Boat Party. The theme was "Back to School" and everyone came decked out in their best school outfits to be greeted by both the 2019 and the new 2020 committees. It was wonderful night full of dancing, food and music and a great send off to a phenomenal year. A massive congratulations to the 2019 committee for their dedication, ingenuity and enthusiasm throughout the year. We wish you the very best of luck for your futures as Optometrists and are excited to see what the next chapter holds for you. Both committees, 2019 and 2020, would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our sponsors as well as DOVS for providing us the support we needed to make sure 2019 was a huge success!!

2020

The year began with the first Cambodia 2020 Eyecare project. Four final year students from the class of 2020 (Minh Pham, Noory Perera, Saranyah Selva Raja and Nikki Hall) travelled to the Prey Veng District in Cambodia with Global Hand Charity to provide eye care to those in need. The students worked diligently alongside volunteers from both Australia and Cambodia to provide eye health check-ups and spectacles to the people of rural Cambodia. More than 2000 people were seen across 5 rural sites, with thousands of glasses dispensed and 300 cases referred for surgical intervention through partnership with Khmer Sight Foundation. The students returned having dealt with a variety of clinical scenarios and with life-long friends, making the trip a truly rewarding and fruitful experience. The students raised over $1200 during the student conference of 2019 as well as during a bake sale, of which some funds were donated towards making spectacles for individuals with high specific prescriptions. The remaining funds will be contributed to Khmer Sight Foundation, enabling pterygium and cataract surgeries to be performed for the Khmer people. The students would like to thank everybody who supported them both financially and emotionally during this trip, and would highly recommend younger year levels to get involved in the upcoming trips.

Despite the numerous Optometry puns to be made this year, 2020 (or 20/20), promises to be an exciting year for all of us. This year UMOSS will continue the previous year's focus of 'student engagement', but given the move to the new building and the shared common room, we have expanded our focus. We will be emphasizing camaraderie amongst the Optometry student cohort whilst also encouraging branching our networks out to the Nursing and Physiotherapy students in particular, but also other health professions. We hope that creating these relationships across cohorts, and both between year levels and within them, will allow for life-long friendships and inter-professional relationships.

UMOSS will be continuing on with Owlbert the Owl and his Instagram page, both of which have a fresh, new updated look. We are continuing to utilize our social media platforms for both social, educational and professional engagement, giving students a quick and efficient way to stay up to date. We aim to further expand the use of our Instagram page to engage with students more personally, particularly in the context of student well-being and self-care throughout the year. This year, UMOSS will be expanding the educational opportunities available to all students. The Big Brother Big Sister program (BBBS), coordinated by Jenkin Yau and Kim Nguyen (OD2), will be hosting more events for all year levels to facilitate inter-cohort friendships and peer-to-peer education. The BBBS will also receive increased support from UMOSS through our Education Officer, Grace Hand, as well as from the 2019 BBBS coordinators, Ravindri Weerasinghe and David Yosua (OD3). Additionally, we are working hard to host even more educational nights throughout the year, providing an opportunity for professionals in the field to directly engage with students of all year levels and provide them with experiences for academic growth.

Though there are exciting, new changes coming in this new year, the staple events of the UMOSS calendar will remain. We have worked tirelessly over the summer to bring the Eyemazing race, Laser Tag & Bowling

Night, Trivia Night and the annual Eyeball all back for 2020. Our netball and futsal teams will also be returning to kick start another exciting season. As eager as we are for all our new opportunities, we will always be devoted to making sure everyone's favourite events are amazing. We would also like extend a very warm welcome to our new OD1 cohort who have just begun their adventure in Optometry. We look forward to getting to know each and every one of you, and are thrilled to have you join our UMOSS family. UMOSS is always here to help guide you through your OD experience.

The UMOSS 2020 committee are dedicated to bringing a wonderful year to all our members and to make sure that this is a year they won't forget! We are ready to take on 2020 with as much enthusiasm and energy as possible, and hope that everyone is as just as excited as we are for the upcoming year.

Thank you,

Chamasha Dissanayake and Ashviney Vigneswaran

UMOSS President and Vice-President 2020

Top: Adam Chen (Social), Noory Perera (Social), Jeremy (Jun Chen) Lin (Treasurer)

Bottom: Kayley Niemela (Social), Grace Hand (Education), Chamasha Dissanayake (President), Ashviney Vigneswaran (Vice-President)

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of our Optometry, Ophthalmology and industry friends, for all that you do to enrich our Department through activities such as clinical placements, practice visits, lectures, tutorials, practicals, case presentations, demonstrations, supervision, mentoring, sponsorship, and philanthropy. We would not survive without your support and kindness, and your contributions are invaluable in shaping our OD student experience. Thank you all.