



NEWSLETTER

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Editorial: Tertiary-level care at the grassroots

*“Your ability will not help if you do not give your availability” –
Saji Ijiyemi*



Very often, sitting in our air-conditioned cars, we forget how hot it is outside, with rooms equipped with air purifiers, we forget how dusty it is on the other side of the window, similarly, working in a metro city with amenities just outside our door, we forget how a subset of people choose to succumb to illness, because it is just too hard to find medical help.

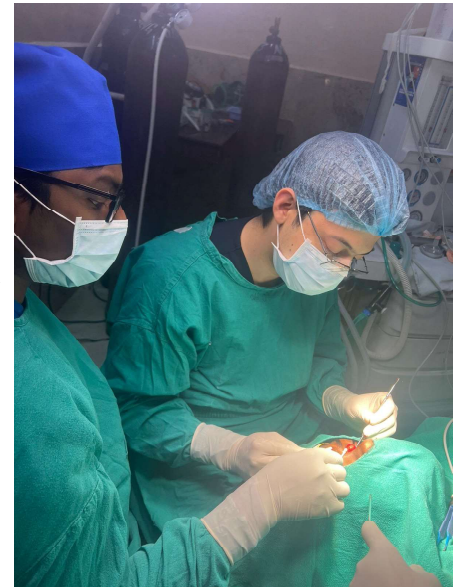
Sometimes, we get a glimpse of this reality, when a one-eyed patient with an impending perforation refuses to come for frequent follow-ups, or a patient with impending graft rejection is not able to fish out money for an eye drop, or an endophthalmitis patient, despite knowing the risks, packs up his bags and leave when told about the cost of the procedure. For them, the facility has to be affordable and available, as staying back in the city leaving their crop and cattle behind, is asking for loss of income.



While good quality basic care is also a rarity in rural areas, finding a tertiary level care in such areas is an exception. Our satellite centers have been providing excellent cataract care for years now. But for specialty care, we earlier had specialists visit once a month and perform surgeries. Need was felt to take it up a notch and provide for surgeries that only a tertiary care hospital will provide, especially to those in need and to those who due to financial and physical disability will otherwise be deprived of it.

SCEH Mohammadi, located near the town of Shahjahanpur, amidst the picturesque fields and canals, is one such satellite center providing sophisticated treatment to the population as close to home as it gets.

An in-house glaucoma surgeon provides the whole range of glaucoma surgeries. While a trabeculectomy surgery is a routinely performed, he is also trained to provide minimally invasive glaucoma surgeries (MIGS) and implant surgeries where trabeculectomy is not preferable. AADI implant, which was introduced in India only 11 years back, is now being performed in this town-let. While Descemet's stripping endothelial keratoplasty (DSEK) and penetrating keratoplasty (PK) were already being done, Descemet's membrane endothelial keratoplasty (DMEK), the corneal transplant with the most physiological outcome is now available for the patients of Mohammadi and surrounding areas. Patients are also being worked up for refractive surgery and called directly on the day of surgery. The oculoplasty team has been performing complex surgeries like orbitotomy for benign tumors, socket reconstruction surgery and skin grafts in general anaesthesia and the paediatric team, squint and cataract surgeries in children.



Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in his book Target 3 Billion discussed a concept of Provision of Urban Amenities to Rural Areas (PURA), with the added aim of creating economic growth opportunities outside of the city. We here at SCEH, realize the dream and want to contribute in whatever little way we can. To further propagate our mission to provide quality care to all strata of society, very soon, retinal surgeries including nucleus drop surgery, vitrectomy and even retinal detachment surgeries will be performed at the center.

SCEH Mohammadi is only one such center, but the reach of specialty services is being extended to rest of our center's in Vrindavan, Alwar and Saharanpur as well..

Because we understand...

**“There is no point creating an oasis,
if the thirsty can't reach it...”**

The therapeutic relationship – A doctor and a patient story

For a young physician, fresh out of fellowship, a shift from supervised and guided learning to independent care and decision-making can be daunting. There are moments in this journey that can shape not only our medical skills but also our self-confidence, empathy, and purpose in life. The ongoing care of a brave young patient, suffering from the complex aftereffects of retinoblastoma has been one such experience for me.

Baby K was diagnosed with advanced retinoblastoma and underwent enucleation with an implant, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy (EBRT). Unfortunately, due to post-radiation complications, the implant extruded, leading to a contracted socket that affected both her appearance and confidence. She underwent a secondary ball implant but it extruded again. This necessitated a repeat surgery. Due to avascularity of the post radiation socket, retention and integration of such grafts can be difficult. The responsibility of making decisions, particularly in the unpredictable field of cancer care, presents challenges that can go beyond the scope of traditional training.

Despite several interventions, Baby K's progress has been gradual, and another surgery is always a possibility. This early in my career, it's hard not to feel the pressure— where every decision, every surgery, every conversation, every examination and every follow-up has the potential to shape not only the patient's future but also your sense of competence. A suboptimal

outcome can sometimes feel like a personal failure. However, Baby K's unwavering faith in our team has been a powerful reminder that the relationship we build with our patients goes beyond clinical results. Caregiving is not a one-way street. Sometimes, it is the patients who help us to heal them. In prolonged illness, like cancer and its long-term consequences, trust between patients and the caregivers is the key to successful care. Baby K's beaming hope and cheerfulness have lifted me through moments of doubt. She brings joy to each outpatient visit, sharing stories about school, academic achievements, family tales and daily experiences. She even got me chocolate as a token of appreciation from her pocket money. A small gift, but a meaningful gesture! Now, she has successfully undergone the second surgery and awaits better cosmesis. This example gives us an important reminder that, though the clinical outcomes might not always meet our expectations, the connections made with patients and the support given during these trying moments can be priceless.

Though the road may be difficult, these encounters make the journey meaningful. These connections will ultimately shape the kind of physicians we become. The strength can come from a partnership built on trust and hope. Compassion can and will help us overcome every adversity. A few lines expressing my emotions and hers....



***“In the face of eye cancer, she stood strong,
A warrior's spirit, where courage belongs.
With a smile that brightens even the darkest of days,
Her resilience shines in multiple ways.
Through battles of surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and pain,
She endured and is ready to fight once again.
A contracted socket, which is a challenge anew,
Yet she holds her head high, with a spirit possessed by very few
In moments of doubt, when fears of re-surgery do arise,
She looks up at me with trust (once again) in her eyes.
Though outcomes may falter, one truth is clear,
The bonds that we build are what keep us near.
Through trials and challenges, she's shown us the way,
That love and compassion are here to stay.”***

-Dr. Chhavi Gupta

Humans of SCEH



I have always dreamt big, but I had never imagined the journey to it would be so exciting. I joined SCEH in 2010, not knowing that this will be the stepping-stone towards my goal.

I had first visited SCEH to get my sister operated for an ear problem, when I saw young girls working here. I instantly like the environment and sought more information. After discussion with a trainee ophthalmic nursing assistant (Yachna, who is now my friend), I applied for the position. After I finished two years of my training that included working in the ward, counseling, PSC, payment desk and eventually the operating room, I joined back as an employee. However, I was not entirely content with how my life was, so I grabbed the first opportunity for growth that I got and joined an OT technician course. Everyone here was very supportive and allowed me time for exam preparation.

Gradually I made friends, and started experiencing the feeling of accomplishment. Each time an outsider nudged me to look for other opportunities, I realized how settled I am here and that I would like to work here for as long as I can. This place gave me not just professional satisfaction but also a family. I am raising two beautiful children while being a working mother. And it



wouldn't have been possible without the flexibility and leaves this institute provides. Everyone is always ready to help and if I am thankful next to my mother for helping me out in my most difficult days, it's my superiors and my colleagues.

What I like the most about this place is that even the greatest surgeons who operate in our OR are very down-to-earth and understanding. They respect each of us and working here is more fun than stressful.

Everyday I come to work hoping to give my 100%, as I believe if one does that, nothing can ever stop you from being successful. And, standing here today, I think I am successful.

-Preeti Rani
Team Leader - Ot
(Cornea, Cataract & Glaucoma)



Dr. Virender Singh Sangwan announced as the President of Asia Cornea Society.



Dr. Nidhi Gupta, Consultant, Department of Cornea was appointed as an adjunct assistant professor at the Duke-NUS medical school, Singapore.



Dr. Tanya Jain, Consultant, Vitreo-retinal Services SCEH, won the 100 power women award.

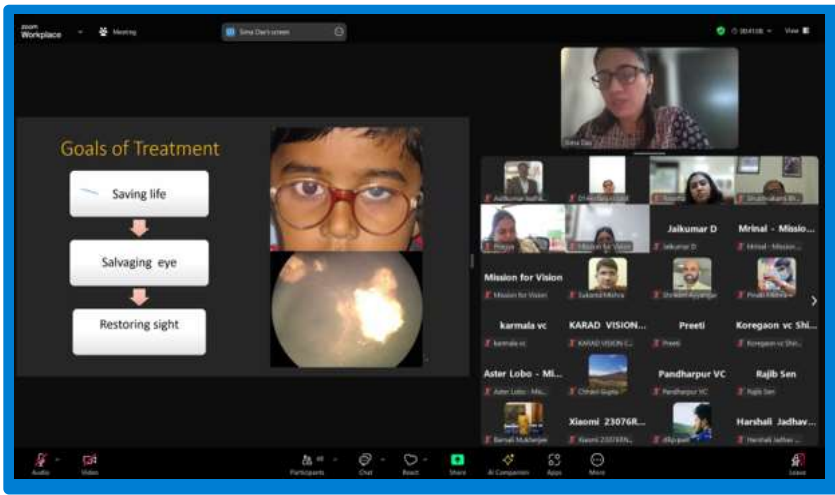
SCEH Eye Bank celebrated the 39th National Eye Donation Fortnight from 25th August to 8th September with various awareness initiatives aimed at promoting the importance of eye donation. These activities included a painting competition for school students, designed to engage young minds and inspire creative reflections on the gift of sight. Additionally, public awareness campaigns were held to inform the general public about the eye donation process, addressing common myths and providing factual information to dispel misconceptions. This two-week celebration underscored the hospital's commitment to educating communities about the life-changing impact of eye donation, fostering a culture of awareness and compassion.



A team from SCEH Optometry Department participated at Asia Pacific Optometric Congress held in Kathmandu, Nepal. The team included Dr. Ramkailash Gujar, Ms. Preeti Sharma, Ms. Sweety Sharma, Ms. Sweta Chitranshi and Mr. Anand Kumar who presented their research and clinical work and chaired scientific sessions also. Mr. Anand also won the best poster presentations award.

Dr. Suma Ganesh, Head of Department, Pediatric Ophthalmology, Strabismus and Neuro-ophthalmology, visited the MIT Project Prakash Laboratory in Massachusetts. The mission of Project Prakash is to bring light into the lives of curably blind children and illuminate some fundamental scientific questions about how the brain develops and learns to see.





Dr. Sima Das conducted an online 'Retinoblastoma Sensitization' session on September 18, 2024, in collaboration with Mission for Vision (MFV), associated vision centers, hospital employees, and the MFV team as part of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. The session focused on raising awareness about retinoblastoma, covering the basics, symptoms, and the critical importance of early detection.



Dr. Obaidur Rehman delivered the Dr. Lal Chand Verma oration at the 6th Annual meeting of the Association of Community Ophthalmology of India, UP chapter 2024 at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.



Dr. Chhavi Gupta discussed the approach to white reflex and orbital masses in the national training project in practical paediatric oncology workshop at Max Hospital Vaishali.



Dr. Erika Gupta was awarded the first prize at the national annual conference of the Oculoplasty Association of India (OPAI) 2024, Jaipur for both the Best Free Paper (Non-Orbit) and Best E-Poster.



Department of Vitreo-retina organized an endophthalmitis workshop, with didactic lectures and hand-on experience in administering sight-saving intravitreal injections.



Department of Pediatric Ophthalmology, Strabismus and Neuro-ophthalmology organized a guest lecture by Prof. Saurabh Jain, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon, Royal Free Hospital, London, on tackling the superior oblique muscle.



Teachers' day celebration at SCEH

"The dream begins with a teacher who believes in you, who tugs and pushes and leads you to the next plateau, sometimes poking you with a sharp stick called 'truth.'" -Dan Rather

A CME was organized in SCEH Saharanpur for practicing pediatricians to increase awareness towards the very apparent as well the “easily” missed out pediatric eye conditions in routine OPDs. The lectures included introduction to various pediatric eye diseases including amblyopia, squint, cataracts and refractive errors, various oculoplasty conditions and retinoblastoma.



A cataract symposium was organized at SCEH, where guest speakers and internal faculty spoke about common and difficult situations in cataract surgery. Over 100 people attended the sessions followed by Dilli-6 lunch.



Dr. Arpan Gandhi conducted the largest PathoIndia webinar.



Stanford List 2024

Top 10 Highly Cited Researchers in 2023, Ophthalmology, India

1. Santosh G Honavar
2. Mohammad Javed Ali
3. Murthy GVS
4. MK Srinivasan
5. Kaliki Swathi
6. Namrata Sharma
7. **Virender S Sangwan**
8. Savitri Sharma
9. Philip A Thomas
10. Vinod Kumar

Top 10 Lifetime Highly Cited Researchers, Ophthalmology, India

1. Gullapalli N Rao
2. **Santosh G Honavar**
3. Philip A Thomas
4. **Virender S Sangwan**
5. Savitri Sharma
6. MK Srinivasan,
7. Balasubramanian D
8. Amod Gupta
9. Murthy GVS
10. Prashant Garg

Dr. Virender Singh Sangwan, was named in the top ten highly cited researchers in 2023 and lifetime highly cited researchers in the Stanford List 2024.



SCEH Mahendragarh, performed its first cataract surgery under the leadership of Dr. Pra-khar Singh. We are now fully equipped to operate in five states.



SCEH was well represented at ARVO-India, with three oral presentations and ten poster presentations. Dr. Anil Tiwari delivered the keynote lecture.



The Orbus IT team visited SCEH Saharanpur for a school screening using the Orbus software, Reach Lite.



Happy reading!

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