



Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital

Caring for the community since 1922...



NEWSLETTER

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Editorial: Taking corneal transplantation to rural India

"Complex problems often have simple solutions" – Steven Magee



Deep in the interiors of the most populated state of India, surrounded on all sides with sugar-cane fields, is a town called **Mohammadi, Lakhimpur Kheri District, UP.** It is where one of our

secondary centers is located. 350 km from the capital city of Uttar Pradesh and 170 km from nearest tertiary care center; this center caters largely to an agrarian population. Owing to the nature of work and residence, trauma with vegetative matter is very common and often leads to corneal ulcers. The practice of prescribing a cocktail therapy of antibiotics, anti-fungal and sometimes anti-viral medication, and that too for prolonged periods, is quite prevalent. The compliance to medication is often poor due to high cost of drugs, especially in daily wagers. Inability to afford treatment and poor knowledge of the etiology leads to a progressive disease in many patients. A lot of patients present to our cornea OPD at SCEH Mohammadi with total corneal melts or a perforation, warranting a therapeutic or tectonic corneal transplantation (keratoplasty).

In this remote rural town of central Uttar Pradesh, a state whose quality of life parameters rank amongst the worst in the country, providing specialty cornea service, leave alone performing corneal transplantation in this area was a far-fetched idea. However, the need for performing keratoplasties in the area was palpable. We were in dire need of an innovative solution.

Often, the simplest solutions are the best solutions....

To provide corneal tissues for transplantation to Mohammadi located 350 km away from our eye bank, a deceptively simple process was put in place. When our

cornea specialist posted in Mohammadi demands a tissue for surgery, the eye bank in our base hospital is contacted. Corneal tissue is then packed in a thermocol icebox with ice packs to maintain the cold chain. It is taped for safety and handed over at the chaotic inter-state bus terminal in New Delhi to a driver driving a public transport bus to the town of Mohammadi, on way to Nepal border The contact number of the driver and the bus number is shared with the center authorities. After an overnight journey, the box is then dropped to the bus stand near the hospital at 5 AM, from where the hospital guard picks it up. After checking for the integrity of the seal, the box is brought to the hospital and kept in the refrigerator. The doctor uses the tissue to perform a keratoplasty, therapeutic or optical, when the patient is ready. The cold chain maintenance is checked and the tissue quality is checked on the slit lamp prior to usage.



Before the opening of a microbiology laboratory in our center in Mohammadi, the same route in the evening was used to transport the corneo- scleral rim and the tissue for histo-pathological examination and culture, back to the base hospital for evaluation.

This system of transport has enabled cornea surgeons present at our centre in Mohammadi to perform kera- toplasty just as timely as one would in a tertiary care center in Delhi. This has benefitted many patients, and saved many eyes, that would have otherwise succumbed to infection. At a cost of merely ₹400 for transport, a sight saving facility of a tertiary care center has been established. This is an example of **Provision of Urban Amenities to Rural Areas (PURA)**; a term coined by **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**.



Number of corneal transplant surgeries performed in Mohammadi since 2017

302	150	31	3
Therapeutic Penetrating Keratoplasty (TPK)	Optical Penetrating Keratoplasty (OPK)	Descemet's Strip- ping Endothelial Keratoplasty (DSAEK)	Descemet's Mem- brane Endothelial Keratoplasty (DMEK)

I graduated from college in the year 2009. Not knowing what I wanted to do, I picked up multiple small jobs here and there, without sticking to one for a substantial time. During my days of struggle, I came to get my eyes tested at Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital. Here, I came across a notice for job application. On a hunch, I applied for it. Few days passed and I joined M.A in Jamia University. I still remember the day when I got a call from Late Mr. Prem Saini for an interview. The recession of 2010-11 was going on at the time and I thought getting a good job at this time would be great. For the interview, I borrowed my cousin's new shirt to look smart and sharp. I successfully cleared the written interview and my subsequent interaction was conducted by Mr. Shantanu and Mr. Harish. Six people, including me were selected for the post of patient care trainee. I worked in every department here including the OPD, medical records, ENT, OT and even as a floor manager. I slowly worked up the professional ladder, becoming a patient care associate in 2013, leader of the patient care team, supervisor and now I am a patient complaint officer also.

I have enjoyed working in every department; in fact, I enjoy everything in my life. I am always happy, be it at home or the hospital...touchwood! Sometimes, people ask me how I stay so happy, I think it's just who I am. If you ask anyone about me, they would say that I am always grinning ear to ear, it's actually because I am genuinely very happy to be here. Every morning I greet everyone I see and they greet me.

Being a complaint officer has its own share of problems. It's just natural for some patients to have grievances,

but I don't like it when patients say not so good things about the hospital. I talk to them with respect and try to solve their problems, but I don't like it when people are dissatisfied with our services. I have been to many doctors but have never seen the kind of doctor patient relationship we have here. People here are so kind and empathetic.



I have been here for many years now. But there is one incident that touched me deeply and makes me want to work here till eternity. A few years back my mother got admitted in the ICU. I was very disturbed and didn't come to work for a few weeks. When she got better and I rejoined the hospital, everyone who met me first asked me how my mother was. Despite his or her engagements and workload, everyone remembered to ask about my mother.

My mantra for life is that everyone has problems in their life, but if you stay attached to the problems, you will never be happy. I say enjoy the problem, and not run away from it. The problem will get tired and go away itself.

Mohammad Anas
Patient complaint officer
SCEH Delhi

Patient Story

"God will always make a way where there is no way" – Gordon B. Hinckley



childhood, which gave him some vision that deteriorated over time. He was an orphan, abandoned by his parents and left to fend for himself in the ashram many years ago. The priest of the ashram wanted to help him,

Through a screening camp organized at a blind school and ashram in Vrindavan, a ten-year-old blind child was identified with retro-lenticular membranes in both his eyes. He had a history of cataract surgery done elsewhere in

but couldn't get him treated due to lack of funds. Both the priest and the child were beginning to accept the little one's fate, when this screening camp came as a ray of hope. A decision was taken to operate on the child and to remove the retrolenticular membrane. The child was operated free of cost at SCEH Vrindavan. The surgery was successful and the child regained vision sufficient to perform his daily activities and studies. The priest and other members of the orphanage were extremely grateful for the service provided. For us, it was a testament to this great institution, which enables us to provide services to all patients, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Story contributed by
Dr. Rushil K. Saxena

Myopia Center of Excellence inauguration



In the month of May, we inaugurated **Swatanter Gupta Myopia Centre of Excellence**, which is supported by Mr. Puneet Gupta, Managing Director, Franke Faber. The chief guest for the occasion was Mr. Sanjay Beniwal, DG prisons (Delhi).

The Myopia Center of Excellence (COE) will play a critical role in the comprehensive management, treatment, and research of myopia. By providing detailed eye examinations using state-of-the-art technology, the centre will accurately diagnose myopia and assess its severity. It offers a full spectrum of treatment options, including corrective spectacles and contact lenses for both children and adults, as well as the latest myopia progression control measures such as pharmaceutical interventions, specialized spectacles, and orthokeratology. Additionally, the center provides options for refractive surgery, including LASIK, PRK, CLE, and ICL for eligible patients.

The Myopia COE aspires to lead in myopia research, conducting epidemiological studies to understand the prevalence and risk factors of myopia and undertaking clinical trials to explore new treatments and interventions. Developing personalized care plans tailored to each patient's specific condition, lifestyle, and preferences is a priority. The centre will also play a crucial role in educating patients and their families about myopia, its implications, and effective management strategies. Furthermore, it engages in community programs, collaborating with schools and community organizations to promote eye health and facilitate the early detection of myopia in children.

In addition to this, SCEH also organized a **Myopia Awareness Week**. The week was filled with impactful events aimed at raising awareness and promoting preventive measures to combat its prevalence. A hands-on workshop on myopia education was met with resounding success. Participants had the oppor-

tunity to engage directly with our expert faculty members, benefiting from insightful demonstrations and practical sessions. The activities included school eye screening camps, educational talks for parents, painting competitions for children, and a myopia awareness run. These events, held at various satellite centers and community locations, played a crucial role in spreading awareness and encouraging healthy practices to prevent myopia.



Donor Speaks

I visited Dr. Shroff's Charity Hospital for my mother's eye problem. It had come well recommended by my family. I knew about the expertise of the doctors but was hesitant about the quality as it was a "charitable" hospital. I was pleasantly surprised to see the quality of work the hospital and staff were doing. I was impressed with the staff's behavior with patients, which was warm and comforting. The hospital infrastructure, though old, was clean and well maintained. I saw a lot of patients who could not pay for their treatment but were being treated with care, so I too decided to help out. I started small, but recently donated for two corneal surgeries. I am happy and trust that my donation will genuinely help the needy.

Aneesha Ganju
General Manager
The Times of India Group

Retinoblastoma awareness week

Retinoblastoma (RB) Awareness Week was celebrated across SCEH network in the month of May, featuring a variety of activities and new initiatives aimed at raising awareness among the community and patients visiting our base hospital and satellite centers. This year's theme, **"Little Superheroes – Our RB Warriors – I Fight the White"** highlighted the indomitable spirit and resilience of our retinoblastoma patients.



Among the events conducted, the art activities and cultural show stood out. Children donned superhero capes, painted face masks and DIY bags, and showcased their talents through dance, singing, poetry, and storytelling, bringing creativity and joy to the week. A supportive session for parents and survivors provided a platform for sharing experiences and fostering a sense of community. **"Taste of Flavors of Hope"** - food stall, featuring delicious food and drinks prepared by Dr. Shirali and Dr. Anushree served as a fundraising event in the OPD waiting area. Health workers and patients purchased items, with all the proceeds going towards the treatment of children with retinoblastoma. Additionally, the inauguration of the **'Corner of Hope'** in the Express OPD dedicated an area to merchandise created using paintings by children with retinoblastoma, as tokens of gratitude to our donors. A heartfelt donation drive was launched to support children fighting cancer, with contributions including stationery, school supplies, books, educational materials, toys, games, and puzzles for underprivileged children. A slogan writing competition, encouraged awareness and creativity.

Heartfelt gratitude goes to our partners—**Koshika Foundation, ICICI Foundation, Cankids, Wen Giving Foundation, and Mission for Vision**—for their invaluable support. Their contributions have been instrumental in supporting the treatment of more than 100 children with retinoblastoma in the preceding year. They have supported the cost of **(454)** examinations under anaesthesia (EUA), **(25)** intra-arterial chemotherapy (IAC)



treatments, and **(160)** systemic chemotherapy treatments for our retinoblastoma patients. Their generosity and commitment have made a significant impact on the lives of many children and their families.

SCEH has significantly improved the management and outcomes of retinoblastoma, especially in North India, through enhanced access to specialized care, advanced diagnostic tools, and comprehensive treatment options. The dedication and efforts of everyone involved during this week have strengthened our commitment to this cause.



*"Created in kitchen with love and hope,
Doctor's hands going beyond the treatment scope,
Food and drinks shall be devoured!
Funds will be raised and blessings will be showered!
We eat mostly to fill our appetite,
Let us come together to fill joy in retinoblastoma warriors' lives!"*

Dr. Chhavi Gupta Narula

Corneal ectasias- from basics to beyond!

The Corneal Ectasia Course was conducted in May under the aegis of **SCB Education Academy**. Both internal and external candidates attended the course. Dr. Jagadesh Reddy, Director-Pristine eye hospitals, Hyderabad was an external faculty for the course. The course covered an entire range of topics from basic science of corneal ectasias to diagnosing and managing the disease. Near-live surgical videos and interesting debates on various topics were very well received. Expert panelists from across the country joined remotely to contribute to the discussion. Hands-on contact lens training was also a part of the course.



Upgrading vision centers



An A-Scan keratometer Eye Lens Power Eye Examination Center was inaugurated in the Vision Centre at Nakur town of Saharanpur in May. There are three such upgraded vision centers in Saharanpur funded by **Mission for Vision**. This modern facility is equipped with an A-scan machine and a keratometer, which are used for evaluations and measurements of intraocular lens power, necessary for a successful cataract surgery, obviating the need to travel to distant hospitals. These centers also offer a comprehensive facility for screening of glaucoma and retinal diseases with the help of hand held fundus camera. This integrated approach not only increases patient comfort and convenience but also promotes better coordination and communication between the vision center and satellite centers, leading to improved surgical outcomes and overall healthcare quality in the village.

Urmila Khemka Cataract Center has been restoring vision for people in need. From December 2023 - May 2024, total 1105 surgeries were performed. 44% of these were either subsidized or free of cost to the patients.



“ We came to know about Urmila Khemka Cataract Center at Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital from a relative. He had been treated here. We too, are very happy and satisfied with the quality of care and treatment and are thankful for the surgery”

Premvati
Cataract Patient
Resident of Bulandshahr



Grameen Bangladesh team visited SCEH in May to get an insight to SCEH's strategic initiatives, impact, management of secondary centres and Public Health interventions. Shri. Shamsul Ahmed, Managing Director, led the team along with Director of Ophthalmology, Dr. Roy and GM, Shri. Moinul Hassan. Grameen Bank is known for its micro-credit scheme in rural areas and impact on alleviation on poverty. It has diversified its social reach to eye care services as well for the past two decades. Seva Foundation, USA, facilitated the visit.

SCEH-SCB Mathura Avoidable Blindness Free Program

SCEH, with support from **Standard Chartered Bank**, is launching a program to conduct door-to-door eye screenings in all villages of the Mathura district in Uttar Pradesh. The goal is to screen residents in 800 villages and connect them to care at our vision centers and the hospital in Vrindavan. We currently have nine vision centers in Mathura, and plan to open ten more this year. Our aim is to screen approximately 1.8 million people and provide surgical services to around 15,000 villagers. By collaborating with governmental stakeholders, we intend to declare all villages in Mathura free from avoidable blindness.



The Peek Team's visit to Mohammadi

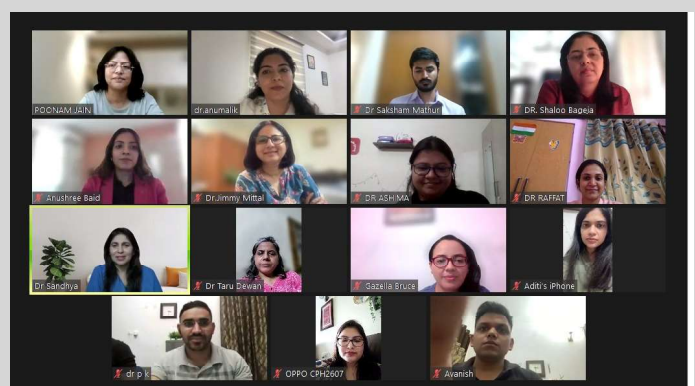


In May 2024, the product and communication team from the Peek Vision Foundation visited SCEH Mohammadi with several key objectives. The Peek product team tested the Near Vision digital application in the community and provided training on its use. They also interviewed screeners to gather feedback on their experiences with the application. Meanwhile, the communication team conducted interviews with various stakeholders, including patients, screeners, vision technicians, community optometrists, ophthalmologists, and core team members, to discuss the Peek application's benefits and implementation challenges.

Additionally, both teams visited the Gola and Aliganj Vision Centers and their surrounding areas to observe ongoing public health projects utilizing the Peek platform, such as Livelihood Impact Fund-Willingness to Pay (LIF-WTP), Improvement Studies for equitable and evidence-based innovation (iMSEEN), and the Peek Powered Program. They also interviewed beneficiaries to gain insights into the impact of these projects.



Dr. Shreya Keshari, Oculoplasty fellow, bagged the first prize for her presentation titled "Tackling triple trouble in Single Shot" in mid-term conference of Oculoplasty Association of India (OPAI) held in May. This amazing work of orbital periorbital reconstruction is a result of establishment of the trauma unit of the oculoplasty department led by Dr. Namita Kumari in collaboration with maxillo-facial surgeon, Dr. Gautam Dendukuri.



Dr. Anushree Baid, final year DNB student, won the first prize in a case presentation on "Unraveling the mystery of a sac swelling" in the resident's chapter of Women Ophthalmologic Society meeting. She will now present the case at a national level.

Samagra Shiksha Early Intervention Center Inauguration

The Pediatric Center of Excellence in collaboration with **Perkins India** and supported by **SBI Foundation**, inaugurated an early intervention center in a vision center at Farah in Vrindavan for children with Multiple Disability and Visual impairment (MDVI). This is one-of-a-kind center in the country to provide access to the families who require home sessions for their MDVI children regularly. The chief guest at the event was Shri. Sanjay Prakash, MD, SBI. Others from the SBI and Perkins team who graced the occasion were Mr. Sashi bhushan, VC, SBI, Ms. Noor Fatima, Assistant Manager, SBI, Ms. Barsha Chatterjee, MD, Perkins and Ms. Sampada Shevde, Country Head, Perkins.



"I am thrilled to witness the remarkable work being done by Dr. Shroff's Hospital for the rehabilitation of multiply disabled children in these rural villages. It's truly commendable and worthy of recognition. The tireless efforts of the team have brought hope and healing to those who need it most. Their selfless dedication is a shining example of compassion and commitment to improving the lives of our society's most vulnerable members."

Sanjay Prakash



Value Story

Most of us are usually so occupied in our own lives that we forget to do good things for others. Dr. Anushree Baid showed love and compassion for all the hospital guards in the form of home-cooked food.



Movie Evening

As part of the initiative of improving work-life balance, SCEH under the leadership of Dr. Julie Pegu, has started a monthly movie screening. So far, two movies have been screened.



An Annual partners meet was organized at SCEH Vrindavan where discussions about community outreach, programs & hospital services took place.



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