

College NEWS



Winter
2007

A year in summary

So 2007 draws to a close having been one of the most turbulent years in medical practice in my memory. The MTAS debacle impacted on all of us one way or another and has been a salutary lesson to our political leaders on the effect of ignoring the advice of the profession. We at the College endeavour to steer a steady course and find ways through so that we ophthalmologists may continue to practise high quality medicine for our patients.

There are encouraging signs that doctors are again being called to lead for change so we are stepping forward for ophthalmology. We are championing the cause of our many patients with chronic blinding conditions whose care is often 'off the radar'. We are excited by the imminent adoption of our first four datasets for the electronic care record. We are advocating medical leadership for the community ophthalmology programmes which are springing up around the country - with some success.

In 2008 there will be much to do defining postgraduate education in the post MTAS era, determining the best way of assessing the Good Ophthalmologist for re-certification, continuing to develop links with our sister organisations overseas and much more.

AND we will be celebrating! It will be our 20th Anniversary. We are running a special Congress enlivened by Merseyside fun so do join us on Wednesday, 21 May to meet your friends and enjoy the party.

I wish you a Happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you in 2008

Brenda Billington
President



The President with Professor Desmond Archer during a recent visit to Northern Ireland. See report on page 14

2	News
3	Congress Update and Announcement of Ball
5	Members' News and Appointments
7	Museum Piece
8	Scientific News
10	Professional Standards
13	Education and Training
14	Out and About
16	Diary

Please note the revised version of the guidance 'The Intravitreal Use of Bevacizumab (Avastin) in AMD'.
<http://www.rcophth.ac.uk/about/publications/>

Articles and information to be considered for publication should be sent to:
kathy.evans@rcophth.ac.uk
and advertising queries should be directed to:
Robert Sloan 020 8882 7199
rsloan@rsa2.demon.co.uk

Copy deadlines

Spring	5 Feb 08
Summer	5 May 08
Autumn	5 August 08
Winter	5 Nov 08

The UK Vision Strategy

– consultation period

The UK Vision Strategy brings together users of eyecare services and professionals from across the ophthalmic sector to produce a unified plan for action on all issues relating to vision across the UK.

It is the UK response to the VISION 2020 resolution, which was passed at the 56th World Health Assembly in 2003.

The resolution urged member states to develop, implement and adopt national plans for tackling vision impairment.

The College has been represented on the Strategic Advisory Group by Nick Astbury, immediate

past President, and a number of ophthalmologists have been able to contribute to the process.

The consultation period for the UK Vision Strategy document has now begun and the College asks members to respond to the document.

The draft document and further details can be found on the Vision 2020 UK website which is as follows:

<http://www.vision2020uk.org.uk/news.asp?newsID=858§ion=000100050006>

Please send any comments you have back to the College by 31 December so that a formal submission can be made.

The Ophthalmic Qualifications Committee (OQC) of the British Medical Association

The College wishes to nominate a representative to sit on the above committee. The OQC oversees applications for admission to the central list of medical practitioners having the qualifications prescribed for participating in General Ophthalmic Services. This is governed by the GOS regulations 1986. Members of the committee are asked to consider applications about once a month and the committee meets annually at BMA House.

Interested members should contact kathy.evans@rcophth.ac.uk. The March 2008 Council will then make the appointment.

“Poetry Patched”

Paediatric ophthalmologists, in particular, may be interested in a poetry competition which is being run by VISION 2020.

It will be judged in two groups: > 10 years and 10 - 16 years of age. Poems about eyes and wearing an eye patch of less than 250 words are invited. The winning poems are going to be read out at the

Children’s Low Vision Conference in May 2008 and published on the Low Vision Steering Group website.

The winning poet will receive a £25 gift token.

Contact :
l.beaumont@vision2020uk.org.uk
by 19 March 2008.

Study Tour to Sweden

24 May – 1 June 2008

This unique visit to Sweden will be led by Christopher Liu and Per Söderberg, an ophthalmology professor in Stockholm. This follows successful study tours to China, Egypt and Syria in recent years.

The visit coincides with the 100th anniversary of the Swedish Ophthalmological Society and we have been invited to their dinner on 31 May. There will be professional visits to three of the following: Malmö, Gothenburg, Uppsala and Stockholm. Dubbed ‘Sweden from Bottom to Top’ we will also see major tourist attractions and be able to take part in hidden treasures including skiing in midnight sun – downhill skiing, snow scooter safari, dog sledge tours – and a sauna afterwards at Riksgränsen at the northern tip of Sweden. There will also be a trip to the opera at the Drottningholm Palace, a boat trip to the 8th century Birka Viking city, and visits to Kullen nature reserve, various gardens, palaces and museums.

We shall not be visiting IKEA, but we will look at Swedish homeware design at the Höganäs factory outlet!!

To find out more about this child friendly tour, please contact CSCLiu@aol.com before Christmas.

Laser Refractive Surgery Assessments 2008

The next assessments will take place in London on the following dates:

3 - 4 March 08 (closing date 7 Jan 08)

13 -14 October 08 (closing date 18 Aug 08)

Cost £2,300

Candidates will only have to attend one day. Successful candidates will receive a certificate of competence to practice, which will be subject to satisfactory yearly appraisals and continuing professional development. This certificate applies only to refractive procedures performed by laser. Full details can be found at <http://www.rcophth.ac.uk/exams/laser-refractive-surgery>

Congress Update

Liverpool, 20 - 22 May 2008

Scientific programme

We have a varied and packed scientific programme and we draw attention to some of the highlights here. The important thing to note is that in our 20th year, Congress will appeal to all ophthalmologists and allied staff, including nurses, orthoptists, optometrists and visual scientists. There will be one main programme with three to four parallel sessions to allow all delegates to tailor their selections.

Special courses run by Larry Benjamin and Brian Little on 'Assessing Surgical Skills' on (Tuesday pm) and 'Advanced Phacoemulsification' (Wednesday am/pm) are available at a small charge to participants. Places are limited – so please book early.

Tuesday 20 May: Things medical, refractive, at the front of the eye, and cosmetic. Ethical Dilemmas in Ophthalmology and introductions to Health Economics will also feature. An ocular imaging course will run under James Talk and Paulo Stanga.

Wednesday 21 May: What we expect of the 21st Century Ophthalmologist, followed by things 'childish', and glaucomatous. From Ashton, we proceed to diabetic retinopathy, and 'Eye care at home and away' and the Bowman Lecture.

Thursday 22 May: The Neuro-ophthalmology session, followed by National Datasets, Training Matters, and Advances in Cataract Surgery (with or without complications).

The Ophthalmology Showcase, involving Regional Societies, will be held as well as highlights from the BEAVRS and MRG and the British Isles Strabismus Association & Children's Eye Group and how to improve cataract services.

We are very fortunate to have three world renowned speakers to deliver the eponymous lectures:

Ashton Lecture

Professor Gregory S. Hageman, UI Carver College of Medicine, Iowa City. Professor Hageman began his career as a marine biologist after graduating with a PhD in biology from the University of Southern California in 1983. His early research interests were focused on retinal cell biology, but as he began to learn more about severe blinding disorders in humans, especially age-related macular degeneration (AMD), he reconsidered his career direction.

Bowman Lecture

Professor Roger Hitchings, IGA Professor of Ophthalmology and the senior glaucoma specialist at Moorfields Eye Hospital, London, has a particular interest in glaucoma surgery, imaging, Normal Tension Glaucoma and glaucoma genetics. He has authored and edited three books, 15 book chapters and over 200 peer-reviewed papers on glaucoma. Professor Hitchings is currently President of the European Glaucoma Society, and sits on the editorial board of five ophthalmic journals.

Edridge Green Lecture

Dr. Anthony M. Norcia, Senior Scientist at The Smith-Kettlewell Eye Research Institute, San Francisco. His work explores the relationship between neural activity and conscious visual perception using magneto-encephalography and functional MRI, and the role that visual experience plays in determining the course of visual development using the EEG. He uses these latest imaging techniques to demonstrate the structure and function of the visual system in health and disease.

On line registration opens on Friday 25 January 2008. Please visit: www.rcophth.ac.uk/scientific

Wanted

Fascinating or unusual items or experiences to auction during the Ball. Proceeds will go to help train ophthalmologists from the developing world. Please contact Susan Mollan soozmollan@doctors.org.uk



Wednesday,
21 May 2008

The Arena & Conference
Centre, Liverpool

19.30 – midnight

Dress code:
Glamorous or
National dress

Tickets: £30
(£250 for table of 10)

Tickets available at
www.RCOphth.ac.uk
from 25 January 2008

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Editor of Eye

After 12 years in post, Professor Ian Rennie will step down as the editor of *Eye*. He has been a superb editor and under his guidance *Eye* has gone from strength to strength. The special *Eye* cover produced in his honour highlights some of his achievements.

Professor Andrew Lotery will be the new editor with effect from 1 January 2008.

The Rennie factor edition:

- Transformed *Eye* from a periodic to a monthly journal
- Chaired meetings with humour and panache
- Brought *Eye* from the kitchen table to the electronic age
- Increased *Eye*'s impact factor to its highest ever level of 2.084

nature publishing group 

Consultant Appointments

Mr Nicholas Beare	Royal Liverpool University Hospital, Liverpool
Mr Paul Cauchi	Southern General Hospital and Gartnavel General Hospital, Glasgow
Mr Victor Chong	Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals, Oxford
Miss Abosede Cole	Eastbourne District General Hospital, Eastbourne
Mr Omar Durrani	Sandwell General Hospital, Birmingham
Major Nicholas Glover	Defence Postgraduate Medical Deanery
Mr Craig Goldsmith	James Paget University Hospital, Great Yarmouth
Dr Fraser Imrie	Gartnavel General Hospital, Glasgow
Miss Susan Johnston	The Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast
Mr David Hugh Jones	Royal Cornwall Hospital, Truro
Ms Annie Joseph	University Hospital of North Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent
Mr Mohammed Majid	Bristol Eye Hospital, Bristol
Mr Ranjit Nair	Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Worcester
Mr Manoj Vijay Parulekar	Birmingham Children's Hospital, Birmingham
Mr Madhavan Rajan	Victoria Hospital, Blackpool
Miss Clare Roberts	St Mary's Hospital, London
Mr Tarun Sharma	Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Worcester
Mr Peter Scanlon	Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals, Oxford
Mr Vikas Sharma	Royal Free Hospital, London
Mr Hooman Sherfat	Whipps Cross Hospital, London
Mr Niaz Mohammed Islam	Queen's Hospitals, Romford
Wing Commander Malcolm Woodcock	Defence Postgraduate Medical Deanery

Members' Offer

Eye Care in Developing Nations, 4th edition:

This important new edition presents the major causes of blindness and visual impairment in a concise and accessible format, alongside the often simple and effective interventions available to health workers in developing countries or those working with pockets of poverty in otherwise affluent countries. It will be of value to ophthalmologists and optometrists in training and practice, and all eye care workers in developing countries.

Members can order at a saving of 20% off the retail price; simply go to http://www.mansonpublishing.com/medicine/med_titles/Schwab.html and enter the discount code RCOPHTHMAN when entering payment details. Alternatively contact the publisher (quoting the same code):

Manson Publishing Ltd
73 Corringham Road
London NW11 7DL, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 8905 5150

STRATEGIC PLANS 2008-2010

The December Council is to discuss a 3-year plan. Members will be sent the plans by email and will be invited to respond by 18 February 2008.

Emails

We urge all members who have not already done so to email database@rcophth.ac.uk with their email address. We currently have email addresses for over 75% of the UK membership but we would like to be able to contact the whole membership electronically. Please note that we can only store one email address.

Obituary

We note with regret the death of **Dr David Christison**, Glasgow.

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- Full suite of accessories



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Museum Piece

WILLIAM WALLACE MD

Scottish ophthalmologist (1860-1940)

Dr William Wallace was a very different character to his illustrious namesake.

He was born in Greenock in 1860 and graduated as an MD with commendations in 1888. He had House appointments at the Royal Infirmary and two years in the Glasgow Eye Infirmary as Resident House Surgeon. He became Clinical Assistant at the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital (Moorfields) and continued his studies of ophthalmology in Edinburgh, Vienna and Paris.

In 1889 a year after qualifying as a doctor he abandoned medicine to enter the Royal College of Music where he became a Fellow. With the exception of the war years 1915 – 1919 in which he was a temporary Captain in the Royal

Army Medical Corps (RAMC), he devoted the rest of his life to music until his death in 1940.

During the Great War he held appointments as an eye specialist attached to the London District and as an ophthalmologist to Colchester Military Hospital and Inspector of Ophthalmological Centres, Eastern Command. He wrote articles about his experiences, amongst them 'Illustrations of War Injuries of the Fundus Oculi' for the RAMC War Museum.

The College has a collection of his drawings showing his outstanding ability as an artist. This extraordinary man was also a composer of some standing, first attracting notice with a Symphonic Poem, 'The Passing of Beatrice', performed in 1892. In addition to his composition and writing on music, he became Dean of the Faculty of Music at the University of London.

His wife was an outstanding sculptress having been a pupil of Rodin.



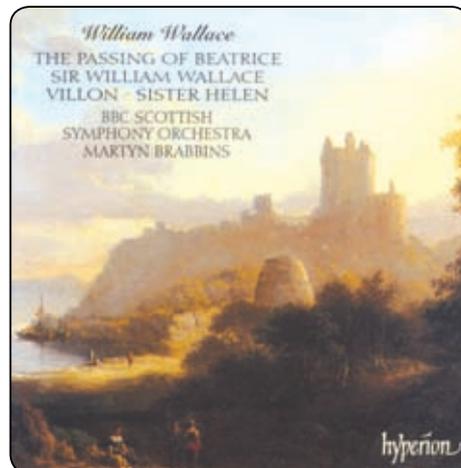
Captain William Wallace in RAMC Uniform



War injury



Fundus painting 1918



Hyperion CD recording



Fundus painting 1917

Richard Keeler
Museum Curator
rkeeler@blueyonder.co.uk

Scientific News

Programme & Seminars Secretary Vacancy

Applications are invited from enthusiastic consultant ophthalmologists who have been in post for at least two years and are members of the College in good standing. Applicants must have a good network in clinical and academic ophthalmology and related fields, work as part of a team and be able to assume office in the New Year. A good sense of humour and willing approach is essential.

A job description is available from:

<http://www.rcophth.ac.uk/scientific/scientificnews>

Closing date: 15 January 2008

Applications to: heidi.booth-adams@rcophth.ac.uk

Myocilin gene mutation analysis (MYOC, TIGR gene; OMIM 601652)

The Wessex Regional Genetics Laboratory now offers a service for the analysis of exon 3 of the myocilin gene for mutations in patients with open angle glaucoma and their relatives. Analysis of exon 3 will identify 90% of mutations associated with myocillin glaucoma (Fingert et al Hum Mol Genet 1999, 8(5) 899-905). This represents 2-3 % of primary open angle glaucoma patients.

Samples of blood (in EDTA anticoagulant) or DNA should be sent to The Wessex Regional Genetics Laboratory, Salisbury District Hospital, Salisbury, Wilts. SP2 8BJ (fao: David.Robinson@salisbury.nhs.uk or David.Bunyan@salisbury.nhs.uk).

The cost for analysis of samples from outside the Wessex Region is £154 for a proband and £77 for predictive testing of relatives. The reporting time is five weeks.

Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)

The STFC funds research into high energy physics, space science and astronomy. It is interested in the transfer of technologies and currently has a number of ophthalmic-related projects.

There will be a workshop on the 6 February 2008 at the Institute of Physics, London, to consider potential new projects. The STFC is looking for ophthalmologists either to attend or to present a paper.

More information on the Council can be found at the website: <http://www.scitech.ac.uk/Resources/PDF/New-PIPSSGuide.pdf>

Surveillance of Eye Anomalies in the UK (SEA-UK)



SEA-UK is a national study of new cases of anophthalmos, microphthalmos and coloboma in children which is being run through the British Ophthalmological Surveillance Unit (BOSU). The aim of the study is to provide accurate estimates of the incidence, to describe phenotypes and systemic associations as well as clinical management. Aetiology and possible risk factors will also be investigated.

The study commenced in October 2006 and the reporting period will end in April 2008. We are very grateful to all consultants who have reported children to this study so far.



Consultants: Please report any child born in the UK, diagnosed since 1 October 2006 on the monthly BOSU yellow reporting card who has:

Anophthalmos and/or Microphthalmos and/or Coloboma of any severity in one or both eyes

Fellows, SpRs, Associate Specialists and SHOs:

If you see a child with any of these conditions, please inform your Consultant so that they can report the child to BOSU.

Complete ascertainment is vital for the success of this study. Your assistance is kindly appreciated.

For further information, please contact the SEA-UK team on 0207 958 8374 or by email at amy.taylor@lshtm.ac.uk.

This study is funded by a grant from BDF Newlife.



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Professional Standards

Independent Prescribing by Optometrists

The Commission on Human Medicines (CHM) has made a recommendation to Ministers on independent prescribing which is likely to come before Parliament in Spring 2008. For a full report see <http://www.rcophth.ac.uk/standards/independent-prescribing>

Progress with Ophthalmic Datasets: Cataract, Diabetes, Glaucoma and more?

Over a number of years the College has promoted the development of datasets for clinical use. In their most basic form these consist of a set of defined variables which can be used to capture the essential elements of information necessary to provide care to an individual with a particular condition. Work on what is now known as the Cataract National Dataset (CND) began in 2002.

Currently there are 4 datasets at advanced stages of development but at various stages of acceptance by the NHS Information Standards Board: cataract, diabetic retinopathy screening, diabetic eye care and glaucoma. From the College point of view, an important objective would be for these datasets to be adopted by Connecting for Health (National Programme for IT) as data standards to which software suppliers could align care record products.

The College is currently actively promoting the development of further ophthalmic datasets, specifically one for age related maculopathy and a generic ophthalmic dataset for more general use.

At this relatively early stage in a long process some tangible benefits can be reported from the CND. With appropriate electronic patient record (EPR) software, continuous clinical audit as a by product of routine clinical activity, the 'Holy Grail of Audit', has come a little closer.

The cataract Do Once And Share (DOAS) project afforded an opportunity to extract and accumulate a very detailed CND compliant set of records from 55,567 cataract operations performed at 12 different trusts across England. The analysis and writing up of these data have now reached the stage where several 'in press' papers are shortly to appear on the Eye website as electronic pre-prints. These papers provide benchmark updates for cataract care in the NHS and beyond and cover preoperative profiling, co-morbidity, postoperative outcomes, anaesthetic and surgical complications, risk assessment and implications of systemic medication use. Although this work has been undertaken by a few 'dedicated enthusiasts' it illustrates what could now be achieved with a coordinated approach, supported by modest investment across a range of current and future ophthalmic datasets within Connecting for Health.

John Sparrow

Improving quality while the clock ticks

Most clinicians will now be working towards the 18-week referral to treatment time (RTT) target. Fewer may be aware that the 18-week pathway is more than another target and that it is part of a wider initiative to improve the speed, quality and consistency of elective care. Clinicians from primary and secondary care, including ophthalmologists, have been working with the

Department of Health (DH) to design 18-week pathways for a variety of conditions with the aim of improving access, quality, appropriateness and safety in the patient journey.

Following a series of Consensus Events, arranged by the Department's 18-Weeks Team, 35 clinical pathway documents (distillations of existing knowledge and guidelines) to assist both NHS commissioners and providers now appear at www.18weeks.nhs.uk.

These are 'living documents' and will always allow for revision and local improvement. The 'rules' of how to start and stop the '18-week clock' and capture such data are evolving. Cataract and chalazion are the only two ophthalmology pathways developed within Phase 1 of this project. There may be benefits in developing additional ophthalmology pathways in due course.

Phase 2 is wider ranging and aims to equip the NHS with tools to support successful local implementation. The further elements being developed include: technology requirements, workforce skills and competencies, service improvement models, Quality of Life (QoL) measures and Patient Reported Outcomes Measures (PROMs), embedding clinical codes and datasets, commissioning levers, disease epidemiology, intervention thresholds and variations.

A workshop has taken place where multi-disciplinary workforce functions and competencies for both cataract and chalazion care – i.e. 'who does what and where' – were mapped out in outline and will now be refined by Skills for Health for these pathways.

The previous work of Ms Rosalind Harrison with allied health professionals was drawn upon in this regard. See 'Ophthalmic & Vision Science NOS' at www.ahpo.org/standards/

We wish to collate and disseminate case studies of good practice or quality improvement initiatives in relation to clinical pathways.

The College's Quality and Safety (QaS) Subcommittee would be most grateful for examples/case studies of better care and safer practice for sharing with colleagues and with the Department of Health. Quicker access to safe care is the aim. The College also welcomes service or quality improvement projects to be presented as abstracts/posters at Congress. A seminar on service improvement in relation to cataract care will take place at the Congress 2008.

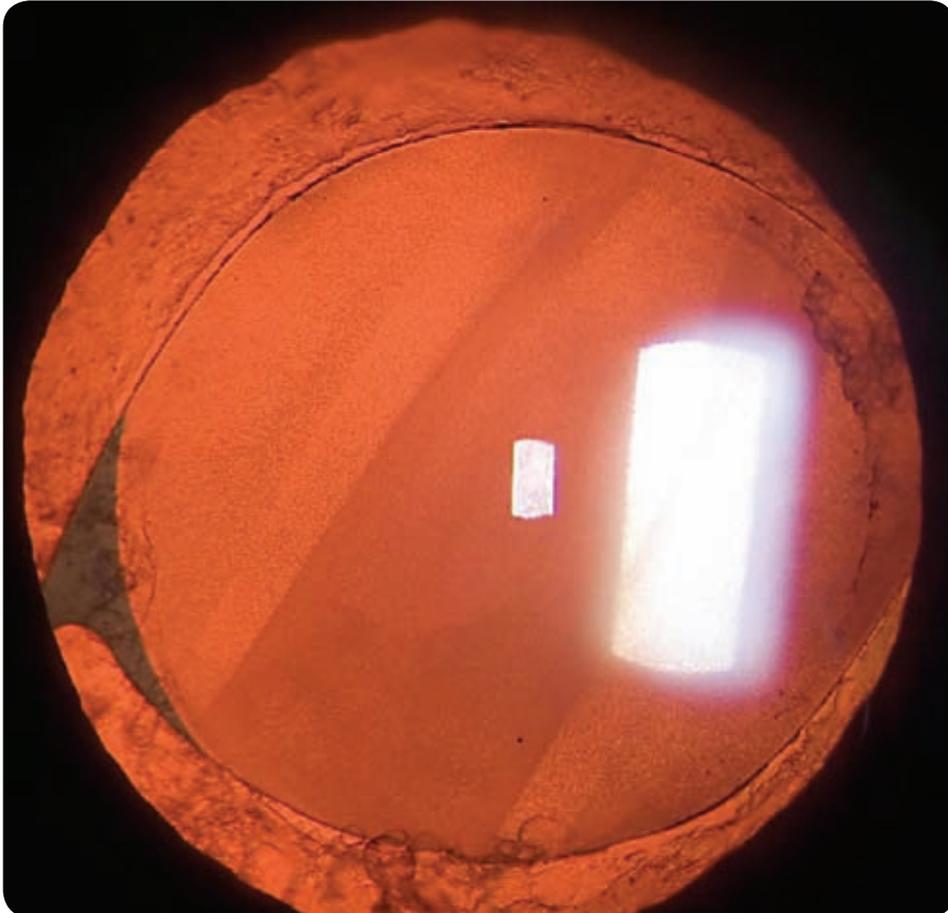
One of the College's main responsibilities is to maintain clinical standards in ophthalmology. QaS aims to provide help and advice on safety and quality issues which may arise in day to day practice. We continue to work closely with several NHS Agencies to this end. We believe that quality and safety improvements in ophthalmology will best come from College members.

We look forward to hearing from members in this regard and also those who may encounter quality or safety concerns. Practical suggestions and visionary thoughts are welcome.

These are opportunities to promote the achievements of your ophthalmic teams.

Simon Kelly
Chairman, Quality and
Safety Subcommittee

Ophthalmic Device Problems



A Hydroview lens implant covered with crystals of calcium hydroxyapatite which were causing severe glare.

When asked by patients 'How long will my implant last?' I would always answer confidently 'a lifetime'. That was until late 2002 when I encountered many patients reporting glare and misty vision who had been implanted a year or two earlier with certain acrylic lenses (Hydroview).

There was no obvious capsular opacification, rather the optics were covered with a variable granular material, sometimes with a red tinge (see illustration). As the material could not be removed with YAG laser, a lens implant exchange was often required.

Similar problems with opacification occurred with some other implants (e.g. AquaSense, Acryflex, etc) both at home and overseas. As a result some lenses were withdrawn following release of Alert notices by the former Medical Devices Agency, now the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

What are the chances of having to remove a lens implant because of material failure? Thankfully the odds have been remote in recent decades. We have faith in the regulation and approval of devices, including implants, but it is surprising how few problems there seem to be considering the rapid evolution of lens implant designs and materials and current volumes of cataract surgery worldwide. Patients are forever being put on new medications which, for all we know, might cross the blood aqueous barrier and have an effect on implant materials. The same

could be true of environmental chemicals. Post-marketing surveillance is thus needed despite the most rigorous pre-license safety testing.

The purpose of this article is to encourage ophthalmologists, in the NHS and independent sector practice, to report all problems with devices – not only lens explantations – and especially models new onto the market. This should be done through the MHRA website www.mhra.gov.uk using the online form.

The MHRA is also anxious to learn of any problems with refractive surgery equipment. The MHRA is keen to work with the College's newly formed Quality and Safety (QaS) Subcommittee to improve the safety of ophthalmic devices and will inform QaS of any emerging issues with a view to releasing alerts rapidly or working with manufacturers to modify devices.

Suspected adverse drug reactions should be reported to MHRA medicines sector through the Yellow Card Scheme. This scheme has existed since the thalidomide tragedy highlighted the urgent need for routine post-marketing surveillance of medicines. The adverse drug reaction online reporting tool is also on the MHRA website.

If you do make a report to the MHRA print it out and save it for your Appraisal folder and also bring it up at local Clinical Governance meetings. Thus any potential learning is being shared both locally and nationally.

So now when asked how long a patient's implant will last, I still say "a lifetime", but perhaps not quite so confidently.

Timothy Rimmer
Quality and Safety Subcommittee.

Rejuvenating Vision



Mary Jones 19 years old
0.0 spherical aberration



Mary Jones 65 years old
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then

now

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1977

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1. Based on an average cataract patient. 2. Artal P, Alcon E, Villegas E. Spherical Aberration in Young Subjects with High Visual Acuity. Presented ESCRS 2006. Paper 558. 3. Artal P, Berrio E, Guirao A, Piers P. Contribution of the cornea and internal surfaces to the change of ocular aberration with age. *J Opt Soc Am A*. 2002;19:137-143

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Education and Training

News on the Portfolio

The new College e-portfolio for specialty registrars ('MMC trainees') went live in August and is generally running well. Some trainees are finding that it takes a bit of time to get used to it, but in the long term it will make life much easier – in particular when trainees are preparing for their annual assessment. All new trainees are encouraged to use it now, although this year they should check with their Deanery staff whether an e-portfolio will be accepted for the first round of Annual Review of Competency Progressions (ARCPs – the new "RITAs"). We are advised that all Deaneries should be ready for this by 2009. Queries should be addressed to portfolio@rcophth.ac.uk

David Cottrell

Chairman, Education Committee

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Audit

In January 2008, the College will be auditing CPD activity. Ten percent of those registered for CPD will be randomly chosen. They will then be contacted by their local CPD representative and asked to show evidence of their CPD activity (Category B) during the year.

Graham Kirkby

Chairman, Continuing Professional Development Subcommittee

Compass: A Clinically Relevant Review for Practising Ophthalmologists

Compass is an on-line teaching resource produced by the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO). It currently contains 600 (1,800 by 2008) review articles on ophthalmic topics and it includes self assessment questionnaires. The College has recently purchased access to Compass for 500 members for a trial period of one year. CPD points (category C) can be awarded, at a rate of one point per hour of study. The College wants to establish if this type of learning would be valued by the Membership. There is no charge to individual members who sign up for the trial period but we do ask participating members to give feedback

in due course. Compass will be available to Members who are registered for CPD on a 'first come first served' basis. If you are not registered with the College's CPD Programme please sign up via the website: www.rcophth.ac.uk

Compass is not available to trainees at present.

To sign up please email: compass@rcophth.ac.uk with your membership number, full name and grade. Please note that in order to arrange your access to Compass the College needs to give the AAO your email address.

E-learning

The E-learning Subcommittee, chaired by Jim Innes, has submitted a bid to the Department of Health for funds so that the College can develop its own e-learning package. Ophthalmology is ideally suited to electronic presentation as it is a visual subject in both diagnosis and surgical treatment. An effective e-learning system will help trainers and allow validation of techniques for clinical and surgical procedures. It should also lead to improved skills and therefore increased patient safety. The outcome of the bid should be known early in 2008.

Cosmetic Surgery, Interspecialty Committee (CSIC) – Senate of Surgery

The College is seeking a representative for CSIC. CSIC was established in 2001 following concerns raised by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for England, Professor Sir Liam Donaldson, about the quality standards and safety of patients in cosmetic surgery. CSIC encourages the development of formal training in cosmetic surgery within the curricula of relevant specialties. The representative would report to the Education Committee and the term of office would run for three years.

Please contact Miss Beth Barnes for further details and a job description. beth.barnes@rcophth.ac.uk

Travel Awards and Fellowships 2008

AWARD	AMOUNT	CLOSING DATE
Keeler Scholarship	One award of up to £20,000	15 February 2008
Fight For Sight Award	One award of £5,000	22 February 2008

Information and application forms for all awards are available on the College website: www.rcophth.ac.uk/education/travelawards

Trainee's meeting ORYCLE 2008

Friday 28 March 2008 in Manchester.
Topics to include: 'My first consultant post', 'Working aboard', 'Working with the new curriculum'. More to be announced shortly.

Full details see College website
www.rcophth.ac.uk/training/otg
or email: otg@rcophth.ac.uk

Visit to Northern Ireland

The President visited a number of regions during 2007, below is a report on the trip to Northern Ireland

'Cead Mile Failte'. It seemed like 'one hundred thousand welcomes' were bestowed on the President when she visited the North of Ireland in October. Having been delayed at a fog-bound Heathrow, it was close to midnight before Miss Billington set down at the George Best Belfast City Airport.

The following morning was an early start, initially visiting the Mater Infirmorium Hospital in the north of the city of Belfast. Having met with two of the consultants Dr. Olivia Earley and Mr. Brendan Lacey, we were shown around the new outpatient building due to open in December of this year.



With a very tight schedule for the day, we travelled to the west of the city to visit the Royal Victoria Hospital, venue of the recent very successful final MRCOphth exams. We were met on arrival by Prof. Archer who, although retired from clinical practice a number of years, is still very active in the research laboratories. After a tour of the facilities we had a whirlwind visit of the clinical department.

Then it was a 90-minute drive to the City of Derry and Altnagelvin Area Hospital, lunching with the consultant and senior nursing staff of the department, including Mr. Naresh Sharma and Miss Janet Sinton. The clinical meeting commenced at 2pm with clinical cases followed by an address by the President. After the guest lecture, this year given by Mr. Steve Vernon, we had dinner in Derry prior to returning to Belfast just before midnight.

I'm sure the President will have some more understanding of the emblem of the province of Ulster with its red hand, having shaken so many hands on her visit! All in all it was a most successful visit. 'Slan go Foil'. [Bye for now]

Michael Quinn

Examinations

The College recently ran the FRCOphth Part 1 in Cairo in conjunction with the British Council. The Chairman of the Examinations Committee is pictured with Hala Hamad who is the British Council's examinations secretary.

Smoking and eye health

– up date from Strasburg

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the most common cause of severe visual loss in the developed world. Smokers are 2-3 times as likely to develop AMD as non-smokers and passive smoking incurs similar risks. The relative risk increases (eight fold or more) in smokers with certain genetic factors, yet very few people are aware of the link between smoking and sight loss. Written warnings on tobacco packaging are governed by EU Directive.

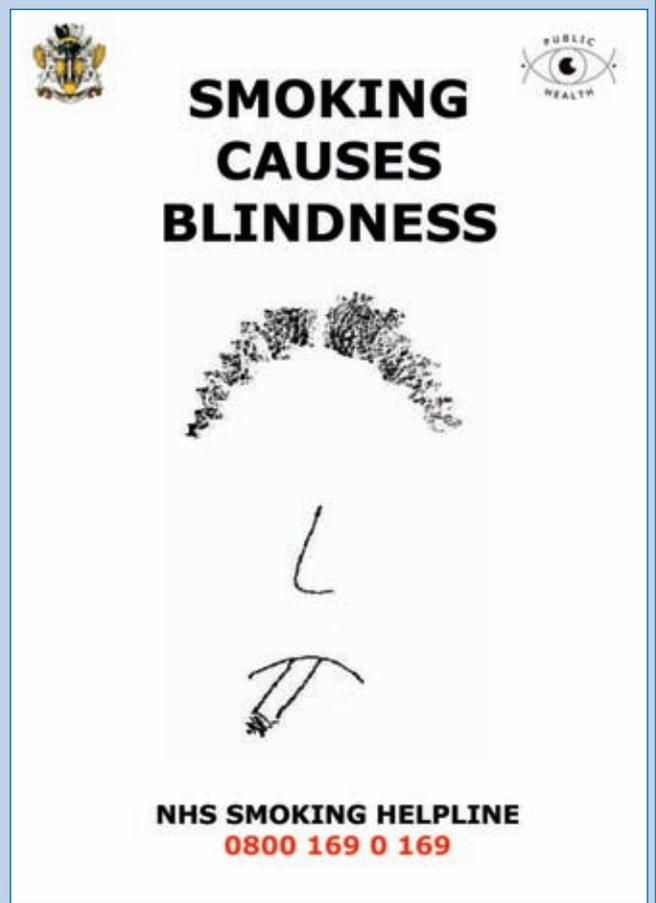
The College's Ocular Public Health Committee is convinced that public awareness of the link between smoking and blindness would be increased if specific warnings were introduced, as has been done in Australia.

We were pleased that the European Parliament supported our calls, in relation to pack warnings, in a large majority vote in Strasburg in October 2007 as part of the campaign towards a smoke-free Europe. This should facilitate the regulation changes needed. We would like to see the UK being an early adopter of novel warnings linking smoking and blindness.

Our European Campaign document is available on the College website, as is the poster shown which you might put in your clinics.

We welcome your views and suggestions.

*Simon Kelly and Nick Astbury,
Ocular Public Health Committee*



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Web: www.altomed.com or Web: www.optic-online.co.uk

Annual Congress - including Ball

20 – 22 May 2008

The Arena & Conference Centre, Liverpool

College Seminar Programme 2008

All seminars take place at the College, unless otherwise stated

Intravitreal Therapies - 1 April

Chaired by: Mr Yit Yang

Teaching the Teachers

Chaired by: Mr David Smerdon

Intravitreal Therapies - 2 July

Chaired by: Miss Clare Bailey

Retinal Imaging Course - 10-11 July

The Institute of Physics, London

Chaired by: Mr Yit Yang

Public Health Ophthalmology - 4 September

Chaired by: Mr Nick Astbury & Mr Andrew Cassels-Brown

Intravitreal Therapies - 25 September

Chaired by: Professor Sue Lightman

Oculoplastics - 30 September

The Institute of Physics, London

Chaired by: Mr Tony Tyers

The Elizabeth Thomas Seminar on AMD - 28 November

Venue: The East Midlands Conference Centre

Chaired by: Mr Winfried Amoaku

Please visit www.rcophth.ac.uk/about/scientific/seminars for further details.

More seminars are planned for 2008.

College Skills Centre Programme 2008

Twelve Basic Microsurgical Skills Courses are planned for 2008 and details are on the website. Please visit www.rcophth.ac.uk/about/skillscentre/ for more details. Additional courses are listed below and these take place at the College, unless otherwise stated.

Intermediate Phacoemulsification Course - 25 February

Chaired by: Mr Mark Watts

Joint Refractive Course with the United Kingdom & Ireland Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons (UKISCR) - 28-29 February

Warrington Hospital

Chaired by: Mr T Akingbehin/Mr Milind Pande/Mr Clive Peckar/Mr Paul Rosen

Oculoplastics HST/OST Study Day - 4 April

Chaired by: Mr Bijan Beigi/ Miss Jane Olver

Intermediate Phacoemulsification Course - 9 May

Chaired by: Mr John Brazier

Medical Retina HST/OST Study Day - 29 September

Chaired by: Mr Larry Benjamin/ Miss Susan Downes

Intermediate Phacoemulsification Course - 10 November

Chaired by: Mr John Brazier

Oculoplastics HST/OST Study Day - 26 November

Chaired by: Miss Sally Webber

VR HST/OST Study Day - 5 December

Chaired by: Mr Paul Sullivan

Study days are planned to cover topics including Cornea, Glaucoma, Neuro-ophthalmology, Oculoplastics and Paediatrics. Confirmed dates will be posted to the website.

Trainee's meeting ORYCLE 2008 - 28 March in Manchester

Please visit www.rcophth.ac.uk/training/otg for more details

Seniors' Day 2008 - 12 June

Please note the date, details to follow.

Regional Study Days

7 March 2008

Salisbury Postgraduate Education Department

Chaired by: Mr Parwez Hossain

Topics will include: allergic eye disease, ocular surface disease, laser refractive surgery, anterior segment imaging

janice.rosher@suht.swest.nhs.uk

www.wessexcourses.org.uk

Other events for 2008

1 February

Midland Ophthalmological Society -

Ocular surface diseases

Wolverhampton Science Park,

Wolverhampton.

jan.jones@rwh-tr.nhs.uk

7-8 March

Brighton Cornea Course, Brighton

A two-day course on cornea and

external disease for all grades of

trainees, Fellows and Consultants

wishing to update themselves.

sharmina.khan@yahoo.co.uk or

csliu@aol.com

12 March

NEOS Spring Meeting –

oculo- plastics

Redworth Hall Hotel, Newton

Aycliffe

executive@neos.org.uk

www.neos.org.uk

13-14 March

27th Meeting of The British

Association of Ocular Pathology

Liverpool Medical Institute

eyepath@rlbuht.nhs.uk

14 March

Oculoplastic Surgical Workshop – a

full day of hands on practical cutting

in a safe and friendly environment

supervised by UK oculoplastic

consultants

Oxford University Anatomy Rooms

thomaskersey@doctors.net.uk

9-11 April

Tropical Ophthalmology Course

International Centre for Eye Health,

London School of Hygiene and

Tropical Medicine, London

shortcourses@lshtm.ac.uk

7-10 May

SOI Società Oftalmologica Italiana

13th Annual Joint Meeting on

Cataract and Refractive Surgery

Naples

sedesoi@soiweb.com

4 June

NEOS & MOS Joint Summer

Meeting – retina

Sheffield City Hall

executive@neos.org.uk

www.neos.org.uk

18 June

Trainees Symposium of British

Oculoplastic Surgery Society.

Northern Stage, Newcastle upon

Tyne

cy.thirlaway@nuth.nhs.uk

bopss@ncl.ac.uk

19-20 June

British Oculoplastic Surgery Society

Annual Scientific Meeting Northern

Stage

Newcastle upon Tyne

cy.thirlaway@nuth.nhs.uk

bopss@ncl.ac.uk

28 June-2 July

World Ophthalmology Congress

Hong Kong

info@woc2008hongkong.org

www.woc2008hongkong.org

7-11 July

Planning for VISION 2020

International Centre for Eye Health,

London

shortcourses@lshtm.ac.uk

11-12 July

West of England Eye Unit/Infirmary,

Exeter: Bicentenary Celebrations

All former members of staff warmly

invited to attend

john.jacob@rdefn.nhs.uk

20th Anniversary Supplement

Founder members of the College are invited to send brief anecdotes and vignettes (up to 150 words) for possible inclusion in forthcoming supplement to be edited by Enid Taylor, member of the first Council

Contact kathy.evans@rcophth.ac.uk

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