

Glaucoma Research Society of Canada News & Information



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We Support New Ideas



Dr. Trope receives Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his contributions to ophthalmology in Canada

Dr. Graham Trope, chair of GRSC's Scientific Advisory Committee and founder of the Society, was nominated by the Canadian Ophthalmological Society. The medal marks the 60th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the Throne as Queen of Canada.

Coffee might raise glaucoma risk

Drinking three or more cups of coffee a day might increase people's risk of developing glaucoma by 66% according to a study by Harvard University researchers.

Drinking this amount was associated with increased risk of developing exfoliation glaucoma, particularly among those with a family history of glaucoma, according to lead researcher Jae Hee Kang at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

Exfoliation glaucoma is characterized by tiny fibers peeling from the eye's lens that can cause a pressure build-up.

Since this is the first study to find this link and because it was not a clinical trial, the results need to be confirmed through more studies before making any recommendations about limiting coffee intake.

- Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science, October 2012

Lions help ensure good vision

The Iroquois-Matilda Lions club presented a cheque for \$5,000, raised at their 65th anniversary celebration, to Dr. Garfield Miller, representing the Glaucoma Research Society of Canada. Bob Bechard, president of the Morrisburg & District Lions, added a cheque for \$300 from his club.

Pictured are Bob Bechard, Iroquois-Matilda Lions president Steve Wilson, Ruth Robertson, who was instrumental in the Lions' decision to support glaucoma research, Dr. "Gary" Miller and Lion Paul Robertson who also helped organize the fundraiser and cheque presentation.

- photo & caption Wendy Gibb, Morrisburg Leader

Mark your Calendars

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, October 8, 2013

6 pm at the Vaughan Estate

Estates of Sunnybrook, 2075 Bayview Avenue

Free above ground parking

President's Message



I'm pleased to let you know that our scientists are evaluating eleven applications for funding research projects this year. The Board and I sincerely thank our donors for making this possible. We especially

want to thank Merck Canada, The Finaid Foundation and Penny Rubinoff who have given so generously.

Thanks also to Ruth Robertson, an ardent advocate of the Society, who marked the Lions Club of Iroquois-Matilda's 65th anniversary with a fundraising event that resulted in a \$5,000 donation.

At this time we also want to congratulate Dr. Trope on receiving the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his contributions to Ophthalmology in Canada.

Fundraising is a priority for the Board and we're always looking for new ways to raise money. We're reviewing participating in a Scotia bank charity run in October and will let you know the details if it's a go.

We're excited about our new fundraising brochure and want to thank Quadrant Marketing for designing it at no cost and St. Joseph Printing for donating the printing of 2,000 brochures.

Contact our office for details on how you can direct your donations to the Society through the United Way or through corporate programs.

I urge you to remember the GRSC in your wills. These gifts allow us to sustain our funding of research projects and at the same time save you income taxes by as much as 46% of your gift!

I look forward to welcoming you at our Annual General Meeting on October 8 at 6 pm at the Estates of Sunnybrook.

– **Martin Chasson, President**

Glaucoma-related vision loss may increase risk for auto accidents

The first study to compare accident rates for drivers who have advanced glaucoma with normal-vision drivers found that the glaucoma group had about twice as many accidents. This study, which was conducted in Japan using a driving simulator, suggests that potential drivers should pass a visual field test to ensure adequate peripheral vision before a license is granted or renewed.

In the study the most common accident scenario for both groups was when a child, car, or other object suddenly entered the driver's path from the side. The glaucoma group had more than twice as many collisions as the normal-vision group.

Glaucoma can partially or severely restrict a person's peripheral vision without damaging their central vision or visual acuity. This means that many people who have the disease would be able to pass the visual acuity test – the only vision test now required for a driver's licence in most countries.

– *Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, November 2012*

Statins linked to reduced glaucoma risk

Growing evidence suggests that statins, originally developed to treat high cholesterol, may be beneficial beyond their cholesterol-lowering properties.

Researchers determined that older people with high cholesterol who had taken statins for two years had an 8% reduced risk of developing open-angle glaucoma. The likelihood of developing glaucoma in people with risk factors for the condition also decreased, as was the risk of requiring some kind of treatment for the condition.

While this suggests that the earlier people take statins the greater the apparent benefit, the findings aren't enough to recommend taking statins just to reduce the risk of glaucoma.

– *Ophthalmology, October 2012*



Dr. Rajiv Bindlish answers your questions about glaucoma

What is the time frame for vision loss in normal tension glaucoma when there was considerable nerve damage (~75%) at the time of diagnosis?

We can't estimate time to vision loss. Each patient progresses at his/her own rate although it's a good sign when there is no progression over the years. Treatment will help maintain vision and slow progressive vision loss in most cases. The Normal Tension Glaucoma Study shows a 30% lowering of eye pressure slows the worsening of glaucoma.

I have been diagnosed with early stage glaucoma. Can you advise me if using a computer all day worsens the condition? What about stress?

Working on a computer all day will have no impact on the worsening of your glaucoma. No studies have shown that stress worsens glaucoma, but many ophthalmologists have found that eye pressure may be elevated during periods of stress. This may be due to poor compliance with eye drops use. The best way to minimize worsening of glaucoma is to use your drops and attend your regular follow-up appointments.

I have moderate to advanced glaucoma. My doctor is recommending surgery. Is it harmful to smoke marijuana? Will it help eye pressure control or affect future surgery?

Avoid smoking marijuana. It lowers eye pressure but only for a short period of time. You would have to constantly smoke in order to keep your eye pressure low and then the health risks, especially of lung cancer, are great. Smoking marijuana post surgery can jeopardize the surgical outcome — you may be at higher risk of failure due to scarring.

My sister has been told that her "temporal angles are narrow which could increase the risk for pupillary block". Because her pressures have been low and stable for many years, she wants to stop her timolol drops. Is this a good idea?

To manage the narrow temporal angle, she may benefit from either a laser iridotomy or else cataract extraction. This will open the angle and lower the risk for pupillary block. Cataract surgery is the more definitive treatment.

If she has definite glaucoma then she should not discontinue timolol. If she has mild elevated eye pressure (ocular hypertension) but no glaucoma damage, then she may be able to discontinue the drops once she has had the laser iridotomy or cataract surgery.

I have had glaucoma for 15 years and I am controlling it with drops. Is laser surgery safe or should I keep using drops?

If eye drops are working well to control your eye pressure, I would not recommend surgery at this point.

If your ophthalmologist is concerned about your eye pressure or you are having side effects from your present medications, then surgery may be an alternative treatment. Its effectiveness is the same as adding another eye drop, but it doesn't always work or its effect may not last.

Questions about Glaucoma?

Email your questions to
info@glaucomaresearch.ca
or call **416-483-0200** **1-877-483-0204**

Dr. Bindlish will answer selected questions in upcoming newsletters.

GRSC-funded research results published in Eye and Brain

The study, published in November 2012, determined that saccadic eye movements were significantly delayed in patients with early, moderate, or advanced glaucoma.

Determining median saccade reaction time may offer a novel functional test to quantify visual function in glaucoma patients.

Further studies are needed to determine pathological processes implicated in delayed initiation of saccades, and to assess whether altering saccades affects daily activities in glaucoma patients.

Authors: Kanjee R, Yücel YH, Steinbach MJ, González EG, Gupta N

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A powerful way for you to fund research

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You can make a gift of an existing policy or purchase a new one naming the Society as owner/beneficiary.

Gifts of an existing policy entitle the donor to a fair market value tax receipt, which can be greater than the cash surrender value.

For Information about GRSC

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The Glaucoma Research Society of Canada is a national registered charity funding research into finding a cure for glaucoma. Since 1988, GRSC has raised over one and a half million dollars for research. Charitable Registration No 889178695 RR0001

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