

SPRING 2004 - News & Information Vol.15

GLAUCOMA RESEARCH SOCIETY *of* CANADA



We've Been Busy

As the mission of the Glaucoma Research Society of Canada is to find a cure for glaucoma through research, we supported five research grants last year and paid out a total of \$65,000.00.

- Drs. Ahmed and Birt, to study prostaglandin efficacy.
- Dr. Elise Heon for detection of molecular risk factors for glaucoma.
- Dr. Mark Lesk for further investigation of the effect of estrogen on the retinal vessel and optic nerve head hemodynamics in a normal population of women.
- Drs. John Flanagan and Mitra Sehi for the study of diurnal variation in intra-ocular pressure, optic nerve head topography and anterior optic nerve blood flow.
- Drs. Yeni Yucel and Neeru Gupta for neurodegeneration of a brain centre in glaucoma: the superior colliculus.
- Dr. Chauhan, Canadian glaucoma study to find the causes of vision loss in glaucoma.

We have moved

Please note that we have moved our offices to 1 Dundas St. West, Suite 2500, Toronto ON, M5G 1Z3

Please do not use the following addresses: 390 Bay Street, Suite 2000 or P.O. Box 18008

AGM 2003 News

Our annual general meeting took place on September 23rd, 2003 at Oakham House on the Ryerson University Campus. This meeting is always an informative opportunity for members to learn more about the latest developments in the understanding and treatment of glaucoma.

Dr. Mark Lesk, one of the country's top experts on glaucoma gave the keynote address. He spoke about his current research project, which is to investigate whether estrogen has a vascular effect on the retinal vessels and optic nerve head hemodynamics in a population of women who will either start hormone replacement treatment or will discontinue hormone replacement therapy. He was confident that the outcome of this study will provide a better understanding of the ocular blood flow mechanisms in post-menopausal women who suffer from glaucoma.

Please join us for our next AGM
on September 21/04 at 6:00 pm
at the St. Lawrence Hall,
92 Front Street East,
Toronto.

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GLAUCOMA RESEARCH SOCIETY of CANADA

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President's Message

It is a great privilege to be the incoming President of the Glaucoma Research Society of Canada. Since its inception in 1988, the Society has been tireless in raising money to support young researchers who are seeking to understand and find a cure for this disabling disease. Thanks to your help, the society has been able to raise well over one million dollars.



Through our newsletters, we share the results of this research with our members. We continue to try to answer your questions. We want to help you be as well informed as possible about glaucoma itself, as well as the research you are funding.

Thanks to your generosity, our plan this year is to award six research grants for a total of \$51,500.00. At this moment, our independent Scientific Advisory Committee is reviewing the applications. We will let you know more about this year's research program in our Fall 2004 newsletter.

Later this year, we will be launching our new website, which will be in English, French and Chinese. It will help us to reach out to the population groups who have a particularly high incidence of glaucoma. It will increase our profile, and help people to reach us more easily.

You told us that you enjoyed the "Tealess Tea" as a special fundraiser. This summer you will be getting an invitation to our third "Tealess Tea", so please join in to the best of your ability.

All of us on the Board are looking forward to meeting as many of you as we can at our upcoming Annual Meeting on September 21st at the St. Lawrence Hall. Through your enthusiasm and generosity, we aim to banish blindness through research and knowledge. Thank you for your continued support.

With very best wishes,

Margaret Rodrigues
President

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Editor - Angel Narick

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You Have Asked

Q Are there any drops to be discontinued in Canada in the near future?

A Yes. Over the next 6 months TIMOPTIC-XE and Timpilo will no longer be produced by Merck Frosst, therefore, if you're on these drops you will need to change. TIMOPTIC-XE can be replaced by Timolol or Levobunolol drops twice a day. Timpilo can be replaced again by Levobunolol drops plus Pilocarpine, but these drops will need to be used separately. Ask your eye doctor to advise you on the best combination for your situation.

Q What does twice a day mean when it comes to putting drops in my eyes?

A Twice a day means inserting drops every 12 hours. Find a convenient time in the morning (usually when brushing your teeth) and put the first drops in your eyes. Exactly 12 hours later, put the drops in again. You must adhere to this time every day.

Q What are the names of different types of glaucoma?

A There are a variety of glaucoma types. These include:

- 1) Primary or chronic open-angle glaucoma (including low or normal tension glaucoma)
- 2) Primary angle closure glaucoma

3) Secondary open-angle glaucoma, including

- Steroid-induced glaucoma
- Pseudoexfoliation
- Pigmentary glaucoma
- Uveitic glaucoma
- Angle recession (trauma)

4) Secondary closed-angle glaucoma, including:

- Neovascular glaucoma
- ICE Syndrome

5) Congenital glaucoma Of all the different types of glaucoma, the most common is primary or chronic open-angle glaucoma. It accounts for approximately 90 percent of all cases. Primary angle-closure glaucoma is the painful form of the disease that is often called acute glaucoma.

Q What is normal eye pressure?

A Normal eye pressure is between 12 and 21 millimetres of mercury (mmHg), with average pressure being 15.5 mmHg. Pressure above 21 mmHg is considered abnormal. Damage, however, can occur at different pressures in different individuals. Some patients develop glaucomatous nerve damage at pressures below 21 mmHg, while others develop nerve damage only at very high pressures. Your eye specialist will tell you whether your pressure is normal for you as an individual.

BOARD VACANCY

Do you have a background in electronic publishing or corporate communications? If you would be interested in being considered for the GRSC Board of Directors, we'd like to hear from you. Please contact Rita de Silva at
416-260-4276.

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Q How common is glaucoma?

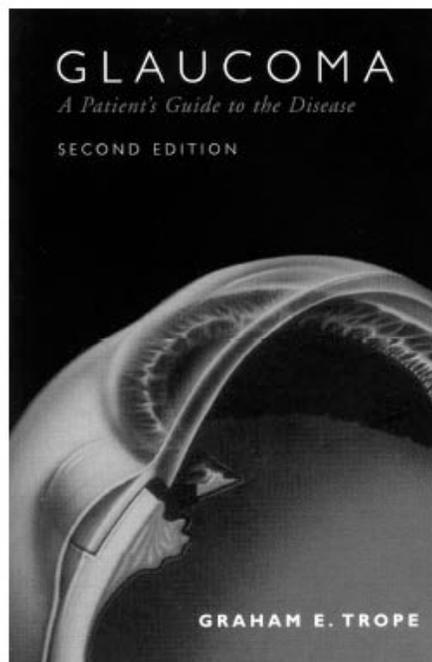
A Approximately 67 million people worldwide have glaucoma. In Canada, more than 250,000 people are affected. The most common type seen in Canadians is chronic or primary open-angle glaucoma. The other types of glaucoma occur less frequently. Glaucoma is the second most common cause of blindness. For every person blinded by glaucoma, six others have lost useful vision in one eye. To prevent serious problems, see your eye doctor for regular eye exams every year.

Q Can babies be born with glaucoma?

A Yes, babies can be born with or develop congenital glaucoma. This very rare form of glaucoma is characterized by tearing, enlargement of the front of the eye, and sensitivity to light. This condition is not related to the more common chronic open-angle glaucoma experienced by adults. Similarities, however, include an increase in pressure in the eye. In a baby this is due to poor development of the drainage system. Unlike the treatment of adult forms of glaucoma, treatment of congenital glaucoma is always surgical.

Did You Know That?

Two percent of people over the age of 40 have glaucoma and the prevalence increases to 4% to 6% in people over 60.



Questions and Answers are excerpts from the book by Dr. Graham Trope *Glaucoma - A Patient's Guide to the Disease*.

The book is available through the University of Toronto Press and our office. Please call Rita de Silva at 416-260-4267 for more information.

SPECIAL THANKS

to all the donors who have responded to our recent holiday appeal for funds. Your help, was and is desperately needed. Deep gratitude is extended to everyone.

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Fundraising News

This year the Tealess Tea Fundraiser will take place in the Spring. All Glaucoma Research of Canada members will receive an "Invitation" with a request to make a donation to our Society that will assist in funding the vital research projects that we support. If you know of any corporations or individuals that would be interested in sponsoring this event for a minimum donation of \$250.00 or more please contact Rita de Silva at (416) 260-4267. Our invitations will be mailed to approximately 2000 homes and the sponsors' names will be prominently placed on the invitation. We look forward to the continued support of all our members in order to reach our goal.

Other fundraising activities which took place last year included an entertaining "Night at the Opera". Fifty members of the Glaucoma Research Society attended a performance of the Canadian Opera Company's production of Puccini's "Madama Butterfly". The evening was a great success for all involved - bringing in \$4000.00 to further our research activities. Grateful thanks to Board Member George Hamilton for organizing the event.

2004 Grant Application News

We are delighted to report that research grants offered by the Glaucoma Research Society are attracting the attention of researchers from across Canada.

We would like to extend our thanks to all of the scientists who have undertaken the independent review of the grants this year on behalf of the Scientific Advisory Committee.

Watch for our Fall newsletter when we will reveal the recipients of these grants.

In Memoriam

Donations have been received
"In Memoriam"
honouring the following:

Helen Britton

Marjorie Kates

Harry Kostman

Antoinette Peacock

M.D.Reid

Benjamin Schneider

Estelle Schneider

Frank Strugnell

Percy Waxer

The Board of Directors is very sorry to inform you of the passing of Ben Schneider, a founding member of the Glaucoma Research Society, and an Honorary Board Member.

We extend deepest sympathy to Ben's family and friends at this time.

A Warm and Cordial Welcome
is extended to

Mr. Harold Wu

who joins our Board of Directors as Treasurer of
the Glaucoma Research Society.

Mr. Wu has previously held the positions of Assistant Deputy Minister for the Province of Ontario and Vice President with the Bank of Montreal. He is currently with the CIBC. We look forward to working together.