

## SPRING 2005 - News & Information Vol.16 No.1

# GLAUCOMA RESEARCH SOCIETY of CANADA



### Research Demystified

Last issue highlighted the recipients of glaucoma research grants for 2004-2005. Starting in this issue, we'll give you more details about the research underway.

#### **A Study of Neuroprotective Effects of the Tetracycline Antibiotic, Minocycline and the Selective Cyclooxygenase-2 Inhibitor Rofecoxib**

Glaucoma is a chronic neurodegenerative disease that results in retinal ganglion cell death and vision loss. In this study, Dr. Melanie Kelly and Dr. Kelly Powell are using anti-inflammatory agents *in rats* to see if they help retinal ganglion cells survive and if they have potential as neuroprotectants in glaucoma. The study will increase understanding of how immune activity works following retinal injury.

#### **The Useful Field of View in Glaucoma**

Dr. Sharon Haymes, Dr. Paul Artes and Dr. Balwantray Chauhan are investigating the visual risk factors that may be common to both falls and motor vehicle crashes. These factors include visual fields, useful field of view, depth perception, contrast sensitivity, glaucoma medications and type of spectacle lenses worn (single vision versus multifocals). The study will provide comparisons between standard visual field techniques and the useful field of vision for detecting glaucoma progression.

### **A Heartfelt Thanks to Our Donors**

**The Glaucoma Research Society of Canada (GRSC) wouldn't be able to support research into this dreadful disease without the help of our corporate sponsors, those who donated to the Tealess Tea, plus the many, many friends who have given generously over the past years.**

### Laser Surgery Evaluated as Initial Treatment

A large clinical study began in early 2005 to evaluate whether Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT) should be the first line of treatment for glaucoma. Current glaucoma therapies typically aim at controlling intraocular pressure to help prevent or slow optic nerve damage associated with glaucoma.

The laser for SLT selectively targets tissue to alter the eye's drainage system and control internal eye pressure without the potential of heat damage.

- *Journal of the American College of Surgeons, January 2005*

### New Drugs May Prevent Scarring

Surgery to create a channel in the eye to drain intraocular pressure-causing fluid is one strategy for treating glaucoma, especially in patients who don't respond well to eye drops and laser treatment. But scarring sometimes occurs after the procedure, often blocking the very channel that was created.

Researchers in London have tested new drugs that mimic the body's immune defense actions on animals and have achieved a success rate of 80% versus the 30% success rate in humans undergoing glaucoma surgery without the drugs. The scientists are planning human clinical trials.

- *Nature Biotechnology, August 2004*

### Many Glaucoma Sufferers Not Elderly

Up to 25% of the two million Americans with the most common form of glaucoma are under age 50, and as many as half may not realize they have it. This according to the Vision Council of America's analysis of published medical literature and data sets including the 2000 U.S. Census. This contradicts the common belief that glaucoma affects only elderly people. Everyone should be aware of the possibility of glaucoma, including people in their 40s.

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## President's Message

Spring is here, and with it comes eleven research proposals from across Canada competing for the GRSC's 2005-2006 grants. A number of dedicated scientists will be putting their valuable time and effort into evaluating the proposals and making recommendations for grants.

First, the proposals will undergo peer review. Then our independent Scientific Advisory Committee (see their names on back page of this newsletter) will review the scores and recommend which proposals should receive grants. Finally,

Dr. Trope will present the Committee's conclusions and recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval.



We will let you know the results of this year's process in our fall newsletter. In the meantime, on behalf of the Board and members of the Society, I would like to thank everyone involved in the evaluation process. Their work ensures that your donations go to the most worthwhile research projects.

We want to keep you more fully informed about the research we fund. Each year, at our Annual General Meeting, we highlight a significant research project so that you can meet the researchers and ask them questions. And starting in this issue, we will be giving you more details about the research projects we fund.

Of course, we would not be able to give grants at all without our donors and the hard work of several Board members. We do hope you enjoyed our recent Tealess Tea, coordinated by Renee Wolfe and Ruth Josephson. Thanks to their tremendous efforts, we raised over \$70 thousand. As you drank your cup of tea compliments of Mother Parker's Tea and Coffee Inc, you were giving a great boost to future research activities and for this, we thank you.

Research into the causes and potential cures for glaucoma is ongoing, so we've included with this newsletter our request for donations along with a return envelope for your convenience. Please give as generously as you can to support essential scientific research into this dreadful disease.

Margaret Rodrigues  
President

## Announcements

### Check Out Our New Website

[www.glaucomaresearch.ca](http://www.glaucomaresearch.ca)

Thanks for your patience and sorry for the delay but GRSC's website is about to be up and running. Please take a look; you will find information about glaucoma and the Glaucoma Research Society.

### Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, September 20, 2005

5:45 pm

CNIB Auditorium

1929 Bayview Avenue

Mark your calendars and plan to attend. Get an update on glaucoma research while you enjoy refreshments. After the presentation, there will be plenty of time to ask our panel of experts questions about glaucoma.

### Membership Draw Winners

GRSC welcomes two new members:

Sylvia Zilpah Rubenstein of Toronto and Patricia Fawcett of Oshawa. Both won their memberships by entering draws at our display at the University of Toronto's Mini-Med Schools.

### VoicePrint Canada

News and information about science, technology, arts and entertainment in an audio format 24 hours a day via cable, satellite and the Internet. For more information, call 1-800-567-6755 or visit [www.voceprintcanada.com](http://www.voceprintcanada.com)

### Bequests

Margaret Mary Fullan

### In Memoriam

Harry L. Romberg

### Special Thanks

Gordon A. Chellew

Henrietta Kostman

## Remember the GRSC in Your Will

Planned giving through wills or bequests is a unique approach to charitable giving that can minimize taxes and maximize estate benefits. In your estate planning, you can designate an amount, percentage or specific portion of your estate to the Glaucoma Research Society of Canada. You can also give life insurance or securities. Call 416-260-4267 to find out more.

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## Dr. Graham Trope Answers Your Questions about Eye Drops

*"Consistent self-treatment is an essential part of preventing blindness from glaucoma"*

### What if I forget to take my drops?

Take them as soon as you remember. Every time you forget to put an eye drop into your eye, your eye will have no medication to control the pressure. The pressure may increase, causing more damage to your sight. To control your glaucoma, you must apply drops regularly according to your doctor's instructions.

### How can I avoid the side effects of eye drops?

Two things will help. Keep your eyes closed for 3 minutes after putting in your drops. Apply pressure to the side of your nose (where your upper and lower eyelids meet) to prevent the drops from entering the nose from your tear ducts.

### What about contamination?

Always wash your hands before applying eye drops. Do not touch the dropper tip or let it touch your eye, eyelashes or any other surface. Always close the bottle when finished.

### I use 3 eye drops. Can I put them in all at once?

You should wait at least 3 to 5 minutes between drops. This prevents them from being diluted and lost in teardrops.

### Does the order of the drops matter?

If you are taking TIMOPTIC-XE®, it should go in last.

### Do eye drops cause cataracts?

Today's eye drops probably don't cause cataracts. Some of the older drops such as Phospholine Iodide may predispose patients to cataracts. Doctors tend not to use these very strong drops in patients with a normal lens.

**Sorry** - Our Spring 2004 newsletter provided incorrect information. Please note: Merck Frost continues to produce TIMOPTIC-XE®

## Tips for Living with Glaucoma

- Follow your doctor's instructions closely and take your medications as prescribed.
- Whenever you see a new doctor or health-care professional, make sure they know you have glaucoma.
- Carry an identification card in your wallet that lists your medicines and treatment schedule.
- Always keep an extra supply of medicine on hand for emergencies.
- If you have any problems with your medicine, talk to your doctor as soon as possible.

*-from The American Health Assistance Foundation*

## Eye Donations from Patients Needed

Information gathered from eyes with glaucoma can help researchers find the cure for this blinding disease. But eye donations are rare, and donations of eyes with glaucoma, rarer still.

To donate your eyes after death, mail your name, address and phone number, along with that of your next of kin to: Linda Sharpen, Eye Bank Manager, Eye Bank of Canada (Ontario Division), Dept. of Ophthalmology and Vision Eyecare, One Spadina Crescent, Room 115, Toronto ON M5T 2S8.

The Eye Bank will contact you with information you can pass on to your family. Your final wishes will be acted upon and the Eye Bank will provide your eyes to researchers. For more information, visit the Eye Bank of Canada's website at [www.eyebank.med.utoronto.ca](http://www.eyebank.med.utoronto.ca)

## GLAUCOMA: A Patient's Guide to the Disease - Revised 3rd Edition Now Available

This authoritative book answers more than 150 questions about glaucoma, tests and treatments. The author is Dr. Graham Trope, Professor of Ophthalmology, University of Toronto, founder of GRSC and head of its Scientific Advisory Committee. Cost:\$15. Book sales help support our research grants.

You can buy a copy online using VISA or send your name, address and daytime phone number with a cheque, or VISA number and expiry date, to GRSC.

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## Looking for a Unique & Memorable Gift to Mark a Milestone in Life?

Whether it's for an anniversary, birthday, graduation, bar mitzvah or the passing of a loved one, a donation to the Glaucoma Research Society of Canada is a meaningful and lasting way to express your sentiments.

Your gift funds researchers working to find a cure and more effective treatments for glaucoma.

It's easy to donate over the phone, through our secure website, or by mail. We will send you a tax deductible receipt and a card acknowledging your gift.

Let us know if you would like to receive this newsletter by e-mail. You can also read it online at our new website:

[www.glaucomaresearch.ca](http://www.glaucomaresearch.ca)

## Do You Shop at Shoppers Drug Mart? You Can Help by Donating Your Points

GRSC uses Shoppers Drug Mart reward points to buy supplies for our office and for fundraising events. This allows us to provide more funds directly to researchers.

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The Glaucoma Research Society of Canada is a national registered charity funding research into the causes, diagnosis, prevention and treatment of glaucoma. Since 1988, it has raised over one million dollars for research.

Charitable Registration No 889178695 RR0001

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