

Glaucoma Research Society of Canada

News & Information



Vol. 29 No. 2 Fall 2018

We Support New Ideas

GRSC Researchers Win Canadian Glaucoma Society Awards

Dr. Sunil K. Parapuram, won the *Best Glaucoma Paper Award for Staff*, while Emily Mathieu who works with two of our researchers, Dr. Neeru Gupta and Dr. Yeni Yücel, won the *Best Glaucoma Paper for a Graduate Student*.

At the same event in June, Dr. Graham Trope won the *President's Award for a Career of Excellence in Patient Care and Research*.



We need you, your families and friends to walk or run in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon on Sunday, October 21, 2018 and help raise money for glaucoma research

Last year your Society's participation in the Marathon raised nearly \$68,000 for research! This year with your help, we can do even better. To register or to sponsor a participant, go to www.torontowaterfrontmarathon.com

Patients Blinded after Stem Cell Injections

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is seeking permanent injunctions to stop two stem cell clinics (U.S. Stem Cell Clinic in Florida, the Cell Surgical Network in California) from operating, after reports of patients being blinded by their treatments.

FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb said that these two clinics and others like them are exploiting patients desperate for cures and causing some of them serious and permanent harm. He said that by marketing products without regulatory approval, both companies, ignoring warnings, have continued to disregard the law and more importantly, patient safety.

Cell-based regenerative medicine "is a field where there's a lot of medical promise, but we also see bad actors, putting patients at risk, harming patients and peddling false hope," he added. If granted, the injunctions against the two companies would stop all of their clinics from marketing stem cell treatments without FDA approval. - *FDA News Release, May 9, 2018*

Call for Participation

Health Quality Ontario is looking to interview patients and their families about **Minimally Invasive Glaucoma Surgery**.

To find out more about participating, check the GRSC website or call David Wells - toll-free at 1-866-623-6868 ext 710 or email David.Wells@hgontario.ca



Dr. Rajiv Bindlish
answers
your questions
about glaucoma

I was successfully treated for an eye infection and inflammation. My doctor is recommending that I undergo a laser treatment to prevent glaucoma. Since glaucoma is not present and I have no cataracts, is it wise to undergo this treatment?

It sounds as if you have been diagnosed with primary angle closure (PAC) which means the internal drain of your eye is narrowed. This condition is usually picked up during a routine eye exam for glasses or in situations like yours where you have another eye condition that resulted in a thorough eye exam.

In PAC, as you age the drain becomes progressively more narrow and may either suddenly block off resulting in very high eye pressure associated with eye pain, headache, blurred vision and nausea, or slowly close resulting in glaucoma damage to the optic nerve and visual field.

If your doctor feels the drain of your eye is sufficiently narrowed that you are at risk for PAC, you should consider a YAG laser iridotomy.

I have had hereditary glaucoma for thirty years. In spite of treatment, my condition has progressively deteriorated. Because of persistent high IOP in my right eye (5% central tunnel vision), my doctor has recommended a trabeculectomy. Would it be better to continue applying eye drops rather than risk losing my residual vision from surgery?

Lowering the IOP is the best way to slow the course of glaucoma. Because of the

advanced nature of your right eye, the lower the pressure, the better.

If drops or laser treatment haven't lowered the pressure to a target IOP, the next best option is surgery. Losing the remaining 5% due to a post-operative pressure elevation is a rare complication.

If you continue with the drops only, you may eventually lose the remaining 5% due to the high eye pressure.

I have glaucoma in my left eye and a severe allergy against preservatives in eye medications. What preservative-free glaucoma medications are available?

Preservative-free glaucoma eye drops available in Canada are: Cosopt - timolol and dorzolamide; Trusopt - dorzolamide only, and the newly released Monopost - latanoprost (Xalatan).

Some medications are not preservative-free, but BAK-free. BAK (*benzalkonium chloride*), the main component of glaucoma eye drops is associated with ocular allergy or dry eyes. BAK-free eye drops available in Canada are: IZBA (Travoprost) and DuoTrav.

I had glaucoma surgery after which my doctor prescribed atropine. Two months later, I was diagnosed with posterior synechiae with large pupil and I cannot read. Is it common to have pain and pressure three months after surgery?

Prolonged inflammation can happen after any surgery and can be a reason for pain.

Dry eyes can also cause pain, so consider lubricating your eyes with artificial tear drops.

The difficulty reading is due to the dilated pupil which prolonged atropine use can cause. It may take some time for the effect of the atropine to wear off, so you may want to try using reading glasses.

I was diagnosed with glaucoma in my left eye and have been applying Lumigan RC daily in both eyes. I have blurred vision in both eyes and cataracts are emerging. Is there a treatment to alleviate the blurred vision?

One of the most common causes of blurred vision is refractive error (sometimes from cataract development), so updating your eyeglass prescription may help. Dry eyes (ocular surface disease) from increasing age and from medications such as Lumigan can also contribute to blurred vision, so you might try using artificial tear drops.

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

**You're invited to the Glaucoma
Research Society of Canada's
Annual Meeting of Supporters
Tuesday, October 16, 2018**

Refreshments: 5:45 pm
Business Meeting: 6:30 pm
**CNIB Conference Centre
1929 Bayview Avenue, Toronto
Parking fees in effect.
See enclosed flyer for details.**

Glaucoma May Be an Autoimmune Disease

In research with mice, scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Massachusetts Eye and Ear found that immune system T-cells cause the retinal damage that occurs in glaucoma, and that previous interactions with bacteria normally found in the body trigger the T-cell attacks on the retina. The discovery suggests blocking the autoimmune activity could offer a new approach to treating glaucoma.

- *Nature Communications, August 10, 2018*

President's Message



In its fiscal year ended May 31, 2018, the Society received bequests of more than \$110,000 and raised nearly \$68,000 from taking part in the Scotiabank Waterfront Marathon. Total revenue of more than \$386,500

enabled the GRSC to make research grants of \$375,000 to 20 successful applicants. The Society thanks all of its generous supporters for making those grants possible.

The GRSC will participate in the Scotiabank Waterfront Marathon on Sunday, October 21, 2018. Dr. Mark Schaffer, our Executive Secretary, is again leading this effort along with a committee of volunteers.

I'd like to welcome Tom Gottlieb who has joined the GRSC's Board of Directors and been appointed Treasurer. The Annual Meeting of Supporters will be held on Tuesday, October 16, 2018 at the CNIB. Copies of the audited financial statements will be available at the meeting and will be posted on the Society's website.

I am pleased to report that our website has been upgraded thanks to the hard work of a committee consisting of Stuart Murray (chair), Dr. Catherine Birt, Barbara Ullmann and Renée Wolfe. Please take a look at www.glaucomaresearch.ca and let us know what you think.

Information is available in this newsletter and on our website about how you can support the Society financially, not only with cash donations but with donations of publicly listed securities (to avoid recognition of capital gains), transfers or designations of insurance policies, designations of RRSPs, RRIFs or TFSAs, bequests under wills and through other methods of giving.

With your ongoing financial support, the GRSC will make a significant difference through its research grants.

- **James M. Parks, President**

Powerful ways to help fund glaucoma research

You can give an existing life insurance policy or purchase a new one naming the Glaucoma Research Society of Canada as owner/beneficiary. Gifts of an existing policy entitle the donor to a tax receipt for the fair market value, which may be greater than the cash surrender value.

You can also designate the GRSC as the beneficiary under a life insurance policy, a registered retirement savings plan, a registered retirement income fund or a tax-free savings account. In that way, the funds will be paid directly to the GRSC without passing through an estate.

Donating marketable securities eliminates any tax on a capital gain and entitles the donor to a receipt for a fair market value donation. This is more tax efficient than giving cash after selling the securities.

Donors should seek professional tax advice in connection with gifts of insurance policies or securities or designations of RRSPs, RRIFs, TFSAs, etc.

You can also make a donation through your will. New rules provide more flexible tax credits if the gift is made within 36 months after death.

Looking for a special and memorable gift to mark a milestone in life?

Whether it's for a birthday, anniversary, wedding, graduation, bar/bat mitzvah or the passing of a loved one, a donation to the GRSC is a meaningful and lasting way to express your sentiments. Your gift funds researchers working to find more effective treatments and a cure for glaucoma.

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

The Glaucoma Research Society of Canada is a national registered charity funding research into finding a cure for glaucoma. Since 1989, the GRSC has raised more than four & a half million dollars for research.

Charitable Registration No 889178695 RR0001

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