



Irish College of
Ophthalmologists
Eye Doctors of Ireland
Protecting your Vision

ICO NEWS

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John Doris

President's Message

Welcome to the spring edition of the ICO newsletter.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have come from overseas to work within our health service and particularly those involved in eye care. You are very much needed and valued.

On behalf of the College I would like to congratulate Aoife Doyle our new Clinical Lead for Ophthalmology. We wish her well in her new role.

Conference season is nearly upon us and this year we are heading to the charming town of Westport on the Wild Atlantic Way. The ICO annual conference will be in the Knockranny Hotel on 15-17 May. The symposia include Vision and Strabismus, Orbit and Socket, and Sustainability in Ophthalmology. The Mooney Lecture 2024 will be given by Professor Geoffrey Rose from Moorefields Eye Hospital, London. The conference programme is shaping up very well and I hope to see you there.

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists, UK are having their annual conference in Belfast on 20-23 May 2024. The ICO has been asked to collaborate in the opening President's Symposium.

Finally, I would like to express our great sadness in learning of the passing of Roger Bowell, past president of the College. We send our sympathy to his family and friends, and pay tribute to our highly respected colleague.

Kind regards

John Doris, ICO President

ICO Winter Meeting and Montgomery Lecture

The ICO Winter Meeting and Annual Montgomery Lecture 2023 took place on Friday, December 1st at the Albert Theatre in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

The Winter Meeting opened with podium paper presentations, chaired by Mr Sean Chen, ICO Scientific and Professional Competence Committee, and was followed by a dedicated session on national clinical audit.

Welcoming guests, ICO President Mr John Doris stressed the importance of national clinical audit and the key role it plays in evaluating healthcare delivery efficiency, with the overall aim of improving patient outcomes.

Invited guest speakers who shared their expertise in this area were Dr Brian Creedon, Clinical Director of the National Office of Clinical Audit and Consultant Palliative Medicine Physician

at University Hospital Waterford, Ms Suzanne Rowley, Irish National Orthopaedic Register Manager at the National Office of Clinical Audit and Mr Martin McKibbin, Clinical Lead for the National Ophthalmology Database UK Audit on Age-related Macular Degeneration and Consultant Ophthalmologist at Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust.

Dr. Brian Creedon provided a comprehensive overview of the practical implementation of national clinical audits, shedding light on the associated concerns, considerations, and the wider benefits of selected measurement to maximise the impact for patients. ➡



Pictured at the Irish College of Ophthalmologists Winter Meeting session on National Clinical Audit are keynote speakers (l-r) Mr Martin McKibbin, Clinical Lead for the UK National Ophthalmology Database Audit on Age-related Macular Degeneration (Royal College of Ophthalmologists) and Consultant Ophthalmologist, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Mr Sean Chen, Chair, ICO Scientific and CPD Committee and Galway Clinic, Ms Suzanne Rowley, Audit Manager, Irish National Orthopaedic Register, National Office of Clinical Audit and Mr John Doris, President, Irish College of Ophthalmologists.

He discussed the boundary that exists between research and clinical audit, noting that all too often too much data can be collected. The focus should always be on driving maximum impact, and aiming to work in partnership with healthcare management and patients to deliver improved outcomes. The question in terms of measuring outcomes and improvements should be 'what has changed'. The NOCA Impact Report 2023 outlines the national improvements in key quality indicators of care and outcomes and can be viewed at www.noca.ie/publications.

In her presentation 'Irish National Orthopaedic Register; Lessons Learned on Implementing an Implant Registry', Ms Suzanne Rowley highlighted the aims of the Irish National Orthopaedic Register (INOR) to improve the quality of services and care provided to patients undergoing joint replacement surgery. Through the use of patient scoring systems and recording on implant performance and patient outcomes, the INOR aims to monitor the safety of implants and support hospitals should an implant recall occur. Suzanne has extensive experience in clinical audit, including her previous role as cancer audit manager at St James's Hospital, Dublin.

Mr Martin McKibbin presented the summary data from the first year report of the National Ophthalmology Database UK Clinical Audit on Age-related Macular Degeneration, which was published in 2023.

Martin was appointed Clinical Lead for the UK AMD Audit in 2020, which is managed by the Royal College of Ophthalmologists and supported by the National Ophthalmology Database (NOD). He is the AMD lead in Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, providing inherited eye disease clinics in several local hospitals.

The AMD audit aims to provide real-world benchmarks that can enable patients, providers and commissioners to compare clinical outcomes and key processes at different sites to improve the quality of care to the many thousands of patients who have the rapidly progressive 'wet' form of AMD in the UK.

With an aging population and the increasing number of patients requiring treatment for AMD, Martin stressed the importance of the NHS having a thorough understanding of the quality of the care it is providing and how to improve outcomes to maintain patients'

quality of life needs.

The NOD AMD Audit received data from 75 centres in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Guernsey. Analysis involved 20,452 eyes from 18,362 patients starting treatment in 2020/21 at 63 centres.

Martin highlighted the key recommendations contained in the first year report and the next steps for the audit, including the planned new features in the year 2 report.

"The data in the audit provides the first opportunity to benchmark care processes and acuity outcomes with peers and identify if any improvements are needed. The report confirms that

regular injections help to stabilise vision in most eyes and early diagnosis and treatment are vital to maintaining good vision after treatment. By identifying best practice and allowing organisations to compare their performance with others, the audit aims to improve the outcomes for all patients having treatment for 'wet' AMD."

The Annual Report includes recommendations for patients, care providers, commissioners and regulators as well as future steps to ensure the expansion of the NOD AMD audit remit.

The first year report can be viewed on the National Ophthalmology Database website www.nodaudit.org.uk

Annual Montgomery Lecture 2023

Paediatric Cataract Diagnostics - and the Role of Genetics in Improving Precise Diagnosis

It was a great honour and pleasure for the College to welcome Professor Christopher Lloyd, Consultant Paediatric Ophthalmologist and Head of Ophthalmology at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in London, to deliver the Annual Montgomery Lecture at the Albert Theatre in the RCSI on December 1st, 2023.

In his lecture, entitled "Paediatric Cataract Diagnostics – and the Role of

Genetics in Improving Precise Diagnosis", Prof Lloyd discussed approaches to diagnosis in infants and children with congenital and pediatric cataract including those found to be associated with systemic disease. He outlined the methods used and discussed the utility of modern investigative techniques and the suggested revised models of care for children affected by these disorders.



Professor Christopher Lloyd, Consultant Paediatric Ophthalmologist, Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in London, Annual Montgomery Lecturer 2023, is pictured with Mr John Doris, President, Irish College of Ophthalmologists at The Albert Theatre, RCSI, Dublin on Friday, 1 December.

Emphasising the importance of early intervention and the advancements in diagnostics through genomics and next generation sequencing, Christopher said:

“Congenital and pediatric cataract is an uncommon but sight threatening condition. It is largely caused by genetic mutations. Some of these mutations are also linked to inborn errors of metabolism. Early intervention in cases amenable to treatment can not only improve visual function but also prevent systemic disease progression.

Traditional diagnostic protocols are unwieldy and costly for health services and mostly unsuccessful - particularly in providing a precise diagnosis. Next generation sequencing (NGS) techniques have revolutionised the utility of genomics aiding diagnostic precision and enabling provision of accurate prognosis, management and treatment.”

Christopher has a longstanding clinical and research interest in the diagnosis and management of infantile and childhood cataract and other inherited eye disorders.

He collaborated with Professor Graeme Black and the ManGen team in the development of a targeted next generation sequencing panel for improving diagnostic precision in children with cataract. Over the last 19 years he has contributed to many teaching workshops at AAPOS, the AAO (American Academy of Ophthalmology) and the Annual Congress of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists.

For 5 years Chris was chair of the Paediatric Sub-committee of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists and is currently a board member and Vice-President of the British and Irish Paediatric Ophthalmology Association (BIPOSA).

References:

Next-generation Sequencing in the Diagnosis of Metabolic Disease Marked by Pediatric Cataract. Gillespie R, Urquhart J, Anderson B, Williams S, Waller S, Ashworth JL, Biswas S, Jones S, Stewart F, Lloyd IC Clayton-Smith J, Black G. *Ophthalmology* (2016)123(1):217-20

Diagnosing the cause of bilateral paediatric cataracts: comparison of standard testing with a Next Generation Sequencing approach. Ashworth JL, Musleh M, Hall G, Lloyd IC, Gillespie R, Waller S, Douzgou S, Clayton-Smith J, Kehdi E, Black GCM. *Eye* (2016) 15-1069

Clinical Spectrum and Genetic Diagnosis of 54 Consecutive Patients Aged 0-25 with Bilateral Cataracts. Bell S, Malka S, Lloyd IC, Moosajee M. *Genes.* (2021) Jan;12(2). DOI: 10.3390/genes12020131.

Appointment of New National Clinical Lead for Ophthalmology

The Irish College of Ophthalmologists is pleased to confirm that Ms Aoife Doyle, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon at the Royal Victoria Eye & Ear Hospital has been appointed Clinical Lead for the National Clinical Programme for Ophthalmology by the HSE. The appointment was announced in December.

Priorities for the programme include the continued roll out of the integrated eye care teams and the implementation of a national electronic clinical management system.

Ms Aoife Doyle has a wealth of experience in delivering ophthalmology services including the development of the integrated cataract and glaucoma service across the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital and Community Healthcare Area with colleagues in Kilnamanagh Tymon Primary Care Centre (CHO7). The service is paperless with an electronic medical record and imaging platform shared with the Eye and Ear Hospital to allow all clinical information to be accessible at the point of patient care.

Aoife has also set up a nurse led glaucoma assessment clinic service where patients with mild to moderate stable glaucoma are monitored in the pathway. Any patients needing review with a consultant, nurse practitioner or specialist optometrist in the case of CHO7 can be referred seamlessly with automatic transfer of information and return of care to the stable clinic from the central hub where appropriate.

Aoife said she is looking forward to taking up the role and working with and supporting ophthalmology colleagues across the hospitals and community service as they continue to look after patients and address capacity demands.

Commenting on Aoife's appointment and the work of the programme, Mr John Doris, President of the ICO and Chair of the Programme's Clinical Advisory Group said,

“The ICO has been a long-standing advocate for the expansion of ophthalmology services for patients in Ireland. The College and National Clinical Programme for Ophthalmology has worked extensively with the HSE



Ms Aoife Doyle, Clinical Lead for Ophthalmology

and with the Department of Health to develop significant workforce and resource planning and supports the implementation of the new Integrated Eye Care Teams which will extend the delivery of specialist ophthalmic care in the non-acute setting. We wish Aoife well in the new role and look forward to continuing to support the work of the Programme.”

The ICO wishes to thank and acknowledge the outgoing Clinical Lead for Ophthalmology, Professor Billy Power, for the significant developments he achieved for the specialty during his tenure. Billy's commitment to the role was unwavering, and he must be commended for the successful initiation of key recommendations contained in the Model of Eye Care, resulting in improved services for eye care patients and greater access to care.

The College looks forward to continuing our support of the work of the Programme with Aoife at the helm.

ICO Annual Conference 2024

The scenic town of Westport in Co Mayo is the destination for the ICO Annual Conference 2024.

We're looking forward to seeing our members and trainees at what is always a hugely enjoyable and immensely educational three days together, with great opportunities for peer to peer learning and networking.

The scientific conference with parallel industry exhibition takes place at the Knockranny House Hotel from the morning of Wednesday 15th until lunchtime, Friday 17th May.

The ICO Scientific and CPD Committee, chaired by Mr Sean Chen, has developed a fantastic programme of outstanding speakers from both home and overseas for this year's meeting. Key areas of focus for the symposia are Vision and Strabismus, Orbit and Socket, and Sustainability in Ophthalmology.

Among our guest speakers, we are delighted to be welcoming strabismus and ocular motility specialist, Mr Ian Marsh, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon, NHS Trust Manchester and Dr Arvind Chandna, Senior Clinician Scientist at Smith Kettlewell Eye Research Institute in San Francisco who will present at the Vision and Strabismus symposium. Ms Kathryn McCreery, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon, CHI Crumlin will discuss difficult paediatric consultations including consent at this symposium, which will be chaired by Mr Sean Chen.

Professor Geoffrey Rose, Consultant Orbital, Lacrimal and Plastic Reconstructive Surgeon and Past Director of the Adnexal Service at Moorfields Eye Hospital, London will present the Annual Mooney Lecture on the Wednesday evening of the conference. Prof Rose will also speak at the Orbit and

Socket Symposium on Thursday morning.

Sustainability in medical and surgical practice is an area of growing importance and consideration as the effects of climate change become ever more apparent. The need to examine how individual and collective actions can support a more environmentally ethical practice will be discussed at the 'Sustainability in Ophthalmology' symposium.

Further to the launch of the HSE Climate Action Strategy 2023-2050 last summer, delegates will hear from Mr Philip Crowley, HSE National Lead for Climate Change on the strategy to reduce emissions and protect population health in the Irish healthcare system.

The healthcare sector is a notable contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for an estimated

5% of total emissions globally and is also responsible for responding to people's changing health needs affected by climate change. This health service-wide strategy aims to reduce the negative climate impacts of our health service, achieve net-zero emissions for the HSE by 2050, and deliver healthcare that is environmentally and socially sustainable.

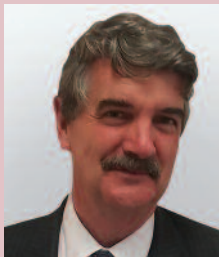
From the specialty perspective, delegates will also learn from clinicians leading change in ophthalmic practice, including Mr Sandro Di Simplico, Consultant Vitreoretinal Surgeon, Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospital NHS Foundation Trusts and Ms Radhika Rampat, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon at the Royal Free London NHS Trust. Radhika is also Chair of the American European Congress of Ophthalmic Surgery (AECOS) Green Working Group (GWG).

Mr Arthur Cummings, Wellington Eye Clinic will share his insights on how AI and the allied health professional team can lead to improvements in achieving a more sustainable clinical practice.

Dr Emilie Mahon, recipient of the



Guest Speakers



Mr Ian Marsh,
NHS Trust Manchester



Dr Arvind Chandna,
Smith Kettlewell Eye
Research Institute,
San Francisco



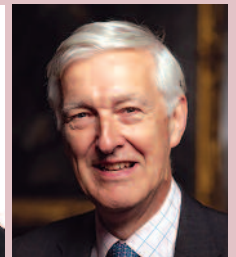
Ms Radhika Rampat,
Royal Free London NHS
Trust



Mr Philip Crowley,
HSE National Lead for
Climate Change



Dr Sandro di Simplico,
Newcastle Hospitals,
NHS Foundation



Professor Geoffrey Rose,
Moorfields Eye Hospital,
London. ICO Honorary
Mooney Lecturer 2024

Barbara Knox Medal at the ICO Annual Conference in 2022, will discuss the findings from her research on the ecological impact of phacoemulsification cataract surgery where she examined the single-use items consumption at University Hospital Limerick. Dr Mahon also conducted a survey on perceptions of the eye theatre staff on waste generated by cataract surgery.

Promoting the importance of sustainability in the specialty is an area of particular focus for current ICO President Mr John Doris, who will chair the session. John is keen to raise awareness levels and encourage action to reduce the carbon footprint in the

specialty. The session will no doubt be a great learning insight for us all.

Workshops, paper and poster presentations and the European Society of Ophthalmology (SOE) Lecture 2024 are among the many other key highlights of the three day conference programme.

As always, the medals for Best Paper and Best Poster will be awarded at the conference. We are delighted that Prof Brendan Kelly, Professor of Psychiatry at Trinity College Dublin, will join us in Westport this year. Prof Kelly will share insights from his new book 'Resilience: Lessons from Sir William Wilde on Life After Covid' which reflects on the pandemic in Ireland and what we

might learn as a society and as individuals from the experience. Sir William Wilde, Victorian doctor and father of playwright Oscar knew the impact of infection through his clinical work and his studies of plagues in Irish history. Prof Kelly will present the medal to the author of the best poster.

The College annual general meeting will take place on the morning of Friday, 17th May. We look forward to seeing you all in Westport May 2024!

Early Bird Registration

Early Bird Registration for our members remains available until 31st March. Please log in to the ICO members portal to complete your registration.

Recipient of John Blake Medal

The John Blake Medal for Best Research Paper Presentation at the Irish College of Ophthalmologists Winter Meeting was awarded to Dr Adan Khan, Discipline of Surgery, School of Medicine, University of Galway.

Dr Khan was awarded the prize for her podium presentation of her research paper "Comparing the Safety and Efficacy of Preserflo Microshunt Implantation and Trabeculectomy for Glaucoma: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis" at the ICO Winter Meeting (Friday, 1 December 2023).

Explaining the premise of her research, Dr Khan said, "*Trabeculectomy has long since been the gold standard of glaucoma surgery. The efficacy however can decrease over time and it can result in both short and longer term complications. The Preserflo Microshunt has been extensively researched since its introduction on the market, particularly in recent years as more attention is being drawn to less invasive procedures. While both procedures have demonstrated to be effective in lowering intraocular pressure (IOP), it remains to be determined which is superior in its efficacy and safety profile.*"

The aim of this systematic review is to compare the outcomes of the Preserflo Microshunt Implantation device with trabeculectomy for glaucoma in terms of efficacy and safety."

The method involved a systematic review and meta-analysis of the literature for studies comparing the

Preserflo Microshunt with trabeculectomy in patients with glaucoma (final search date 21 June 2023).

The primary outcome measures recorded as a measure of efficacy of the interventions were IOP at final follow up and IOP reduction (IOPR).

Secondary outcomes recorded to measure efficacy were reduction in the number of glaucoma medications and re-interventions. To assess safety profile, the proportions of patients with postoperative complications were recorded.

Seven articles were included in this systematic review and meta-analysis by Dr Khan and 1,353 eyes.



Dr Adan Khan

From her research, she concluded that "When compared to trabeculectomy, the Preserflo Microshunt is not as effective in lowering intraocular pressure, has a similar safety profile, and a lower reintervention rate."

The College congratulates Dr Adan Khan on her award and all who presented their research findings from the podium at the ICO Winter Meeting.



Accepting the award on Dr Adan Khan's behalf at the Winter Meeting is Ms Lisa McAnena (centre), Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon, Beaumont Hospital and Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, Dublin pictured with the late Dr John Blake's daughters, Professor Patricia Fitzpatrick (left), Public Health, University College Dublin, and Dr Alison Blake, Irish College of Ophthalmologists.

ICO Winter Meeting & Annual Mo



Dr Aisling Foley-Nolan, Dr Joanne Kearney and Dr Margaret Morgan



Professor Christopher Lloyd, Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in London, Mr John Doris and Prof Camilla Carroll, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland Council.



Ms Edel Cosgrave and Dr Denise Curtin



Mr Tim Fulcher and Mr Paul O'Brien



Mr Gerry Fahy and Siobhan Kelly



Dr Danyal Memon, Dr Julia Zhu and Dr Rory Holohan



Dr Natalie Ng, Dr Glynis Hanrahan and Dr Emily Greenan

Montgomery Lecture

1 December, 2023
Albert Theatre, RCSI



Mr John Doris and Ms Janice Brady



Dr Alison Blake and Miss Marie Hickey Dwyer



Dr Moji Oshodi and Ms Susan FitzSimon



Dr Fionn O'Leary, Dr Grace McCabe and Dr Liam Bourke



Dr Simon Neary, Dr Aoife Smyth and Dr Alan Hopkins



Mr Rob Acheson and Mr Donal Brosnahan



Mr Stephen Farrell, Ms Lisa McAnena, Mr Edward Dervan and Miss Yvonne Delaney

ICO Masterclass Series in Glaucoma.

The College was delighted to host, throughout the autumn of 2023, the ICO Masterclass Series in Glaucoma.

The first Masterclass opened on October 19th with Prof James Morgan, University of Cardiff, who gave a presentation on the challenges of implementing a glaucoma service in Wales. A broad and entertaining panoramic view, he covered the clinical evidence base, relevant guidelines as well as the very real trials of IT network integration, all of which provided a visualisation of the anticipated experience in Ireland as we plan to implement our own integrated glaucoma service nationally.

November 16th treated us to a line up of three international speakers starting with Prof Augusto Azuara Blanco, Queen's University Belfast, scrutinising the quality of the evidence base that should inform the best of glaucoma decision-making, in a world where sound bites and headlines appear the order of the day. This was followed by the most up to date presentation on the TAGS study with Prof Anthony King, University of Nottingham, with his much anticipated

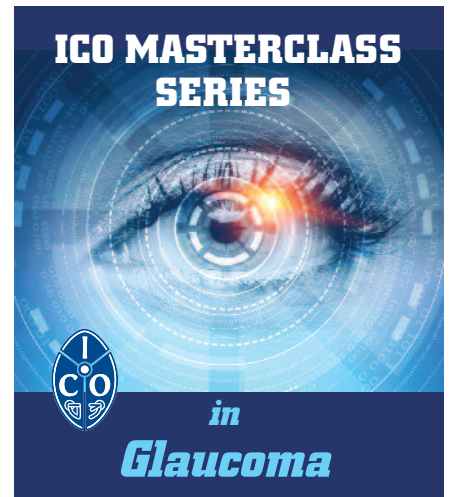
study showing the results of medical versus surgical treatment for advanced glaucoma.

The final presentation of the day was a fascinating talk on the role of perimetry in modern evidence-based glaucoma management by Prof Anders Heijl, Lund University, who joined us via Zoom from Malmo, Sweden. A leader in the international glaucoma world and author of the Early Manifest Glaucoma Trial, we were honoured to have his participation in the Masterclass event.

Each talk was followed by an excellent Q&A session as well as excellent case presentations from trainees with robust and diverse opinion expertly chaired by Ms Aoife Doyle and Prof Colm O'Brien.

The series concluded on November 30th, with Ms Winnie Nolan, Moorfields Eye Hospital, on the challenging subject of narrow angle closure. Again the audience was treated to an indepth journey through the new evidence that has accumulated in recent years. Superb case presentations by trainees as well as Mr Jeremy O'Connor, teased out the complexities inherent in the management of angle closure glaucoma and highlighted the advantage of face to face meetings to really drive the learning home.

Special thanks to Ms Aoife Doyle and Prof Colm O'Brien who not only chaired the sessions but contributed to their initial design and guest list as well as steered local teaching in the run up



to the event. Thank you also to all those who presented and to all the consultant trainers and glaucoma specialists for their participation and organisation of cases. Special thanks to Andrea and Rebecca at the College who organised venues and IT for each event and made each event run seamlessly on the day.

The College are very grateful to Abbvie for their sponsorship of the Masterclass Series without which it could not have taken place. The Masterclass purpose is to promote excellence within the training programmes and invigorate training and learning in the chosen specialty, not just on the day of the Masterclass itself, but in the aligned teaching and training that takes place both before and after the event.

All speakers very kindly allowed their presentation to be recorded and these will be placed on the Trainee portal strictly for the benefit of trainees on the National Training Programmes.

Miss Yvonne Delaney, Dean of Postgraduate Education, ICO.



Ms Aoife Doyle, Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital, Miss Yvonne Delaney, Dean of Postgraduate Education, ICO and Miss Winifred Nolan, Moorfields Eye Hospital, London



ICO Anterior Vitrectomy Course

With the opening of the new RCSI Simulation Suite, York Street in 2018, Surgical Simulation Courses became an established and mandatory part of the Surgical Ophthalmology Training Programme.

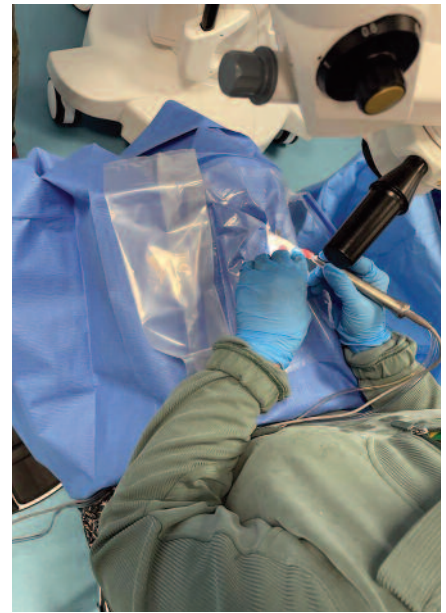
Successful Phacoemulsification and Anterior Vitrectomy courses were held in 2019 and 2020. Unfortunately Covid-19 saw the cancellation of courses throughout '21 and '22 and difficulties accessing the suite in 2023 marked another year without simulation training.

Throughout 2023 the College explored access to other facilities, in order to enhance access to simulation training for both BST and HSTs on the National Training Programme.

A pilot Anterior Vitrectomy Course was planned and held in the Alcon

facility in Cork on Friday November 23rd, 2023. Four HSTs and one BST were invited to attend the pilot course. ICO Dean Miss Yvonne Delaney was delighted to invite back Mr. Larry Benjamin, internationally renowned surgical simulation trainer, to act as the lead instructor for the course. The College was also delighted to welcome Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeons Ms Sarah Moran and Mr Terence McSwiney from Cork University Hospital, who joined the training faculty for the first time.

The course delivered a combination



of didactic and interactive teaching sessions followed by experiential learning in the lab with each trainee getting one to one training on machine setup & settings, step by step performance of anterior vitrectomy and a final session on risk profiling and error avoidance to reduce the rate of PCR and vitreous loss in the first place. The training environment was relaxed with plenty of time for repetition of different techniques and discussion of case scenarios.

Thank you to Alcon for providing access to their wet and dry lab facilities and to Tommy Cooper, in particular, for his support for the event.



Roger Bowell

The ICO was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of our dear friend and colleague, Mr Roger Bowell, on the 5th November last.

Roger was a past president of the College (1997-1999) and a hugely influential figure in the specialty of ophthalmology in Ireland. He was held in the highest esteem during his years of practice at the Mater Hospital and Temple Street Hospital in Dublin.

In recent years, the College had the pleasure of speaking with Roger during the preparations for the centenary celebration of the Irish Ophthalmological Society (IOS) in 2018 and the publication of the College's centenary book.

Roger had been a figure of immense influence and importance during the foundation of the Irish College of Ophthalmologists in 1992, having held a Past President post of the Irish Faculty of Ophthalmology which had been founded

in 1958. The IOS merged with the Faculty in 1992 to form the Irish College of Ophthalmologists.

He will be remembered so fondly by us all at the College. We extend our

deepest condolences to Roger's wife Pamela, and to his children Ian, Laura, Emma and Andrew, and to his extended family and friends.

May Roger Rest in Peace.



Roger Bowell (far right) pictured with fellow Past Presidents of the ICO (l-r) Brendan Young, Peter Tormey, John Nolan, Rob Acheson, Billy Power, Louis Collum, Patricia Logan, Alison Blake and Marie Hickey Dwyer at The Shelbourne Hotel (November 2017).

AAO Congress - San Francisco, November 2023

During their visit last November to the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) Congress in San Francisco, ICO President John Doris and Dr Alison Blake met with senior AAO executives to discuss global physician education resources and also their focus on sustainability in ophthalmology.

The College is working to inform and support our members in our collective effort to reduce the carbon footprint of the specialty and look forward to placing a spotlight on this conversation at our upcoming Annual Conference at the 'Sustainability in Ophthalmology' symposium.

Resources aimed at proactive

examination of operational practices, including medical and drug waste management, reduction of packaging and printed materials, optimisation of resources and ophthalmic team education will be explored and discussed with our members.

We understand this is a growing

area of concern and consideration for many clinicians. The College is keen to do our part in fostering greater awareness among the ophthalmic community in Ireland about more sustainable practices and promoting the recommendations that have been made through international collaborations.



Pictured at the AAO Congress 2023 which took place in San Francisco (3rd - 6th November) are Dr Daniel J Briceland, AAO President, Dr Alison Blake, AAO International Trustee at-large, Ms Gail Schmidt Vice President, AAO Global Society and Global Relations and Mr John Doris, ICO President.

Professional Competence Update

The Medical Council recently approved the new Maintenance of Professional Competence Rules and Guidelines representing an important step to bring Maintenance of Professional Competence (MPC) in line with international practice and incorporate right touch and compassionate regulation.

The Rules and Guidelines associated with the evolved Maintenance of Professional Competence Framework Model will commence in May 2025

The requirements for the PCS year 1 May 2024 – 30 April 2025 will remain as

the current PCS year (40 hours in any CPD category and 1 audit/quality improvement project).

The new arrangements which formalise the operation of the evolved MPC Model, will commence later this

year with the first year focusing on developments and to support implementation for May 2025.

The College will keep our members informed ahead of the implementation of the new structure.

Vision Ireland, the new name for NCBI, ushers in a change in sight after a century of service provision

The National Council for the Blind Ireland has been renamed Vision Ireland. The name change is designed to be more inclusive, ensuring that everyone knows Vision Ireland supports people with a wide range of visual impairments.

Census data, published recently, indicates there are more than 296,000 people in Ireland who are blind or have a vision impairment. The name change for the 92-year-old national sight loss agency is designed to reach even more of the 6% of the population, or one in 17 people who are blind or have a vision impairment. The data show that blindness or vision impairment affects 27% of all people experiencing at least one long-lasting condition or difficulty to any extent.

At the launch of the rebrand on Monday, November 6th 2023 at the Irish Georgian Society in Dublin, the organisation's first official office in the 1930's, Mr Chris White, CEO of Vision Ireland said;

"Many people with sight issues are missing the opportunity to avail of our services because they are unaware that we support people with different levels of visual impairment. Our new name, Vision Ireland, is designed to reflect our broad range of support."

The Vision Ireland name was developed through extensive consultation with staff, service users and volunteers – and they also like how our new name better represents the forward-looking and dynamic organisation that we are.

As Vision Ireland, this marks a new chapter in our continued commitment to working with and advocating for all those with vision loss as well as promoting eye health across Ireland."

Speaking at the launch event, Neasa Hourigan, TD, said: "Being the parent of a child who has a vision impairment, I have firsthand experience of the challenges and uncertainties that can arise. At every stage, NCBI has been a tremendous help, offering invaluable support and resources that have made a significant difference in our lives.

"The dedication and expertise has given us hope, empowerment, and a brighter future. We are immensely

grateful for their unwavering assistance and I would encourage every parent and guardian to avail of Vision Ireland's support and services," Ms Hourigan added.

Vision Ireland provides services – including rehabilitation training, assistive technology, advice and information, emotional support, and employment advice – to over 8,000 people annually.

Further information is available on www.vi.ie and on the ICO members portal, with helpful video guidance on the referral process.

Speaking at the event was Wicklow native Lar Keogh, who was born the same year NCBI was launched, 92 years ago. "I've had vision issues for quite a few years, but I didn't realise I could avail of the services of NCBI. It's been a revelation for me since I became a service user and I have been welcomed with open arms by everyone at Vision Ireland. Their support has been fantastic, and it's really made a big difference in my daily life."



Chris White, Chief Executive, Vision Ireland pictured with Neasa Hourigan, TD and her daughter Edith.

Patient Support Services – Fighting Blindness

Stargardt Support Group

We'd like to remind members that the ICO portal houses information on various support groups and services available for patients.

A list of Fighting Blindness support services and groups has been added to the resource recently. The support groups all take place over Zoom, with the exception of the Dublin Peer Support Group, which also meets in person.

A new Stargardt Support Group which will be held in person at the Fighting Blindness offices, 7 Ely Place, Dublin 2 will start in the coming weeks (spring 2024).

Stargardt Disease is the most

common form of inherited juvenile macular degeneration, with a prevalence estimated between one in 8,000 and one in 10,000 people. The carrier rate has been quoted as high as 1 in 20 to 1 in 50 people.

Receiving a diagnosis can be overwhelming for anyone. During these times, many people find it useful to talk through their feelings with someone outside their usual circle of family and friends, and often by meeting with others who have



faced similar difficulties, vital support can be found.

Any patient or family member looking for further information can contact Kathryn on 01 674 6496 or email:

insightgroups@fightingblindness.ie

Retina International World Congress (Dublin) 2024

Fighting Blindness will host the Retina International World Congress (RIWC24) in Dublin, from June 5-8, 2024.

The congress will take place at the Dublin Royal Convention Centre, Radisson Blu Royal Hotel, Dublin, continuing to nurture and develop the great hope and optimism that emerged from the last Congress.

The meeting will bring together international retinal scientists and clinicians alongside leaders in the fields of advocacy, patient representatives, health research and support organisations.



Call for Abstracts

On Friday, June 7, 2024, the Scientific Programme of RIWC24 is taking place.

Fighting Blindness are now accepting abstracts to be considered for poster display as well as short talk presentations.

Further information can be viewed at www.fightingblindness.ie

Closing Date:
5pm, March 1st, 2024

Save the Date

*Tuesday, October 1st, 2024
The Gibson Hotel, Dublin*



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