

Message from the President



Welcome to this edition of the College Newsletter. The College's Annual Conference in the RDS in May was a great success and I was delighted that so many of you were able to attend the meeting and of course the celebration of the College's 21 years. For those who were not able to come along to the event I hope you will enjoy the pictures from the evening in this edition. Now that the College has 'come of age' it is a good opportunity for us to look to the future and how we wish the College to evolve over the next 21 years. I welcome all of your thoughts and ideas in this regard.

Next year's meeting will be held in the south of the country and you will soon receive a link to a short survey, the results of which will be used to drive the programme for the meeting. This will give us an excellent opportunity to continue to ensure the relevance of the annual conference and to tailor the schedule to best meet the needs of the members.

With Best Wishes

PATRICIA LOGAN, *President,
Irish College of Ophthalmologists*

ICO Annual Conference 2012



Speakers from the Paediatric Symposium at the Annual Conference in the RDS Donal Brosnahan, Kathryn McCreery, Evelyn Paysee & David Coates.

The College's Annual Conference was held in Dublin on Thursday 24th and Friday 25th May. The meeting continues to be the highlight of the College calendar and this year's event was no exception. The numbers attending were very high with the vast majority of the specialty in Ireland gathering to enjoy both the scientific presentations and the opportunity to meet and converse with colleagues.

This year's meeting was held in the Royal Dublin Society and

(perhaps somewhat unusually) Ballsbridge basked in glorious sunshine throughout. Paul O'Brien, chair of the College's Scientific Committee & the group members designed and facilitated a very interesting programme that included invited international and national speakers, updates on research and more focused workshops.

Larry Benjamin travelled from the UK, where he is a surgeon at Stoke Mandeville Hospital to speak

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If you would like to make any suggestions for future issues of the College Newsletter please contact
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on advances in the prevention and management of cataract surgery complications. Larry also has a special interest in teaching micro-surgical skills and was instrumental in helping the College to launch its own annual micro-surgical skills course for BST trainees. The course will run for the third year this coming September 10th and it is a mandatory for all new BSTs to participate.

The conference keynote address was given by Prof Des O Neill, National Programme Director for Traffic Medicine, a joint appointment of the RCPI and the Road Safety Authority. Des is leading the drive to develop new guidelines for doctors and drivers on medical fitness to drive, on how to manage driving in the face of illnesses that might have an impact on ease and safety such as epilepsy, loss of vision and alcohol dependency. Pat Logan and Garry Treacy sit on the RCPI Working Group on Traffic Medicine which is looking at these issues, to bring the eye perspective. During his talk Des discussed what some of the latest research has shown; that contrary to the perceived view and despite what is clearly an increased burden of illness and disability, older drivers are among the safest drivers on the road. The latest research has even shown serious injury was halved for children in car crashes where a grandparent was the driver rather than a parent, despite less rigorous use of child safety measures.

A very popular symposium on Practice Management and Development generated much discussion following its look at the business realities of private practice and the new consultants' contract. The symposium generated media attention and the results of the survey carried out by Paul Connell featured on the front page of the Medical Independent.

Delegates were particularly delighted to welcome Evelyn Paysee and David Coates from Baylor College of Medicine and the Texas Children's Hospital in Houston to the meeting to discuss their experience of the surgical management of complex strabismus and refractive surgery in children.

Kathryn McCreery, who organised the participation of Evelyn & David also addressed the latest developments in the sub speciality.

The annual Mooney lecture drew the meeting to its conclusion on

Friday evening with Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Iceland, Einar Stefansson talking about retinal oximetry in health and disease.

The full conference programme was a great deal more comprehensive than the lectures mentioned here, with many more College members and trainees presenting papers, chairing sessions, speaking during the symposia, adjudicating papers and giving workshops and the annual meeting would not be a success without their contribution – thank you to all.

Mooney Lecture 2012



2012 Mooney lecturer Einar Stefansson with Mark Cahill & Pat Logan

Einar Stefansson gave the 2012 Mooney Lecture, on what was his second visit to the College's annual conference. Having travelled in from Reykjavik, Einar discussed his experiences of diabetic screening in Iceland. Diabetes is one of the main causes of blindness in the world and there is a worldwide epidemic of diabetes. Screening for diabetic retinopathy is one of the most cost effective programs in health care. In Iceland such a program reduced the risk of

blindness more than four-fold in the diabetic population, following the program's start in the 1980s.

Einar has been involved in the development of an information technology platform to individualize diabetic eye screening. This software has reduced the cost of screening by more than 50% while also maintaining its clinical efficacy. It is available both as computer software and as a smartphone application. Further information is available at www.risk.is

Eithne Walls Research Meeting



Pictured at the Eithne Walls Research Meeting in the Eye & Ear on June 21st: Mary Walls, Louis Collum, Farhida Ibrahim, Gerard Walls, Sorcha Ni Dhughbhaill.

The Eithne Walls Research Meeting is held in memory of Eithne Walls. Eithne was an ophthalmology SHO at the Eye & Ear Hospital when she was tragically killed on the ill-fated flight AF447 which disappeared over the Atlantic as it traveled from Rio de Janeiro to Paris.

Following this tragic accident Eithne's family established a Research Fund at the Research Foundation, Royal Victoria Eye & Ear Hospital in her memory. This fund helps to support the vital work of the Research Foundation into eye disease but also provides particular support to young

doctors at the hospital engaging in research and wishing to travel abroad to present at international meetings.

This year's Eithne Walls Research Meeting was held on Thursday 21st June 2012 in the Education & Conference Centre where all basic specialist trainees in ophthalmology in the hospital were invited to make a presentation based on clinical or basic science research. Dr Farahida Ibrahim was awarded the Eithne Walls Memorial Medal for her paper on "Diabetic Retinopathy Screening using manual and automated 3 Step Grading of Fundus Photographs with supplementary OCT in an OPDR setting". An additional prize was also awarded this year; the Research Foundation clinical prize was given to Sorcha Ni Dhughbhaill for her work on "Genetic & demographic risk factor profile in the Irish AMD population".

The fund is used to support research projects into new developments in ophthalmology, which will ultimately benefit patients. To donate to support the Eithne Walls fund please visit www.researchfoundation.ie or please make cheques payable to Research Foundation, Royal Victoria Eye & Ear Hospital.



Pictured at the Eithne Walls Research Meeting in the Eye & Ear on June 21st: Pathma Ramasamay, Lisa McAnena, Farahida Ibrahim, Mairide McGuire, Sorcha Ni Dhughbhaill, Michael O'Rourke and Reinhold Goetz.

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind

The College was delighted to welcome Guide Dogs to this year's annual conference to talk about their work and here, Lean Kennedy, Access & Education officer for the organisation gives some information on accessing the services they provide.

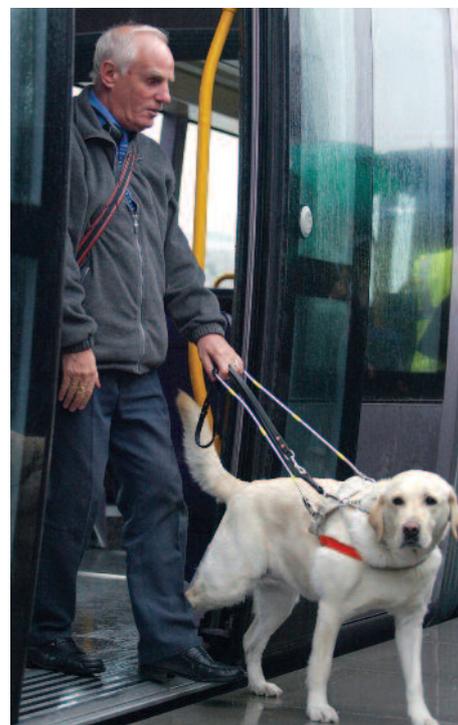
Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind Welcomes Direct Referrals; Ophthalmologists play a key role in supporting persons with significant vision impairment. Their level of support to a patient can go beyond treating or stabilising the eye condition. By referring a blind or vision impaired person to Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind (IGDB) an ophthalmologist can help ensure the person can adapt to their loss of vision.

How to make a referral: Simply contact their Client Services Department by post, email or telephone. Referrals can also be made online through the organisation's website. The Client Services Team is well equipped to deal with queries and appropriate support is provided to applicants throughout the process.

The benefits of making a referral: Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind is a unique charity dedicated to enhancing the mobility and independence of persons who are blind or have impaired vision. It offers a variety of training programmes which can enhance a person's safety, independence and confidence.

Its life changing services include:

- **Guide Dog Programme:** Many people who have impaired vision or total sight loss enjoy the independence and companionship that comes from working with a guide dog. What distinguishes a guide dog from other mobility aids is it also offers social and emotional benefits.
- **Orientation and Mobility Programme (Long Cane Training):** This programme is tailored to enable participants to use the long-cane as a mobility aid with a strong emphasis on safety, confidence-building and promoting independent travel.
- **Independent Living Skills Programme:** This programme is designed to help participants acquire skills on how to make the home accessible and to gain greater confidence in performing household chores.
- **The Next Step Programme:** This programme aims to equip young people who are blind or vision impaired with the skills to manage the transition to life in college or the workplace.



Did you know?

- Persons do not have to have total sight loss, or be registered blind, to avail of these services. In fact, most persons who use these services have some remaining vision.
- Age is not a barrier. The minimum age requirement for these services is 16 and there is no upper age limit.
- All services are provided free of charge.
- Each guide dog partnership costs the organisation €38,000.
- Fifteen per cent of Irish Guide Dogs for the Blinds funding comes from government grants. The rest is raised through voluntary donations.

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind would be delighted to provide its service brochures for display in your clinics. Your direct referrals are always welcome.



irish guide dogs
for the blind

Contact Details:
Client Services Department,
Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind,
Model Farm Road, Cork.
Telephone: 021 487 8200,
Email: info@guidedogs.ie,
Website: www.guidedogs.ie



ICO Medal Winners



Paul O'Brien pictured with medal winners Pathma Ramasamay and Lisa McAnena, together with Pat Logan

Each year at the College's Annual Conference 2 medals are awarded – the Barbara Knox medal for best paper presentation and the Sir William Wilde medal for best poster presentation. As has become the custom over the past number of years, the poster presentations are also allotted a short time to address delegates from the podium.

At this year's meeting the Sir William Wilde medal was awarded to Lisa McAnena a first year BST at the Eye & Ear for her research on the Irish experience of childhood craniopharyngiomas. The research was carried out in the RVEEH and the Department of Oncology at our lady's hospital in Crumlin and Lisa was assisted in her work by D. Brosnahan, M. Capra, A. O'Meara and J Pears.

Craniopharyngiomas are slow growing, benign tumours of the sellar and para-sellar regions of the central nervous system. Patients present with variable symptoms of raised intracranial pressure, endocrine disturbance and visual symptoms. The study is a ten year retrospective review of 19 paediatric craniopharyngioma patients treated at Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Crumlin. The objective was to look at trends in clinical presentation, investigation, and surgical and radiotherapeutic interventions in these patients, with a focus on visual signs/symptoms at presentation and post-treatment outcomes.

Results showed that 63.2% of patients had signs of visual disturbance at presentation. All children underwent surgical intervention, and 84.2% received radiotherapy. Visual outcomes were variable, with visual fields improving in approx. two thirds with all patients requiring close, indefinite, multi-disciplinary follow-up to manage disease recurrence and complications.

The Barbara Knox medal for best poster was awarded to Pathma Ramasamay for his work on Proteomic Research in Uveal Melanoma. Pathma is currently working towards an MD combining lab work in DCU with clinical work in the Eye & Ear.

Uveal melanoma is the most common primary intraocular malignancy in adults, with an incidence of 5-7 per million per year. Around 50% of patients develop metastatic disease and survival rates at 5, 10 and 15 years are 65%, 50% and 45% respectively. The aims of the study are to further the molecular biological understanding of the events governing development of metastasis and to identify targets for therapy. Proteomic analysis of 8 metastatic vs. 8 non-metastatic tumours have identified 4 proteins that are differentially expressed in the 2 disease groups. Validation of results by immunohistochemistry and siRNA knockdown experiments in cells lines are currently being performed.

ICO Annual General Meeting REPORT

The College's Annual general Meeting was held on May 25th during the annual conference. Chairperson Pat Logan welcomed the new Council members who began a three year term: Paddy Condon, Margaret Pierse and Paul Connell. The Committee Chairs updated the audience on the activities of all the College Committees.

The Public Affairs Committee continues to work to ensure that the College and the eye doctors it represents, fulfils its role as the authority on eye care in Ireland. The key message the Committee has been working to deliver is that patient safety and excellence in eye care is central and that the College must be involved in any discussions that look at the possibility of change to the existing models of care.

Denise Curtin addressed the ongoing service level agreement between the College and the HSE for the provision of ophthalmic training and extended thanks to all those doctors who have contributed to the education programme, without which it would not be possible to provide such a comprehensive teaching and training to NCHDs.

The first year of mandatory professional competence maintenance drew to a close on April 30th and the College has provided extensive support to the members to assist them in meeting the minimum requirements for compliance.

Paul Moriarty gave an overview of the clinical programme for ophthalmology and of the ongoing consultation process with those who deliver the eye care service. The programme aims to examine the existing model of care and to consider whether changes to that model can ensure that the service can continue to deliver against a backdrop of increasing patient numbers and dwindling resources.

21st Birthday Celebrations

The College celebrated its 21st Birthday with a formal dinner in the Four Seasons on Thursday 24th May. College President Patricia Logan, who was joined by 8 Past Presidents of the College, welcomed the members and invited guests. John Nolan, Paul Moriarty & Marc Guerin spoke about the Irish Ophthalmological Society, the Faculty and their vision for the future of the ICO.



ICO Past Presidents: Peter Eustace, John Nolan, Louis Collum, Brendan Young, Philip Cleary, Rob Acheson, Peter Tormey, Paul Moriarty and Patricia Logan.



Eithne Blake, Alison Blake & Edel O Connor



Brendan Young & John Nolan



Mary Jo Eustace-Ryan, Dharm Pandeya, Nafa Bader & Behrooz Golchin



Deepti Thacoor



Patricia Logan & Mike Brennan



Dara & Eleanor Kilmartin, Conor Murphy & John Stokes



Michelle Coffey & Edward Loane



Brendan Young, Sonia Manning & Anne Nolan

21st Birthday Celebrations



Maureen Hillery & Mark James



Paul O'Brien & Stephen Beatty



Ann McCarthy & Anne Collins



Maeve O'Doherty



Catherine Cleary, Martin Coyne & Aziz Rehman



Mr & Mrs Frank Reid with Ravi Kumar



Eilis McGovern, Patricia Logan & Denise Curtin



Mr & Mrs Peadair MacManus



Siofra Acheson & Aisling Foley Nolan



Louis Collum, Philip Cleary & Peter Eustace



Nora Stuart, Mr & Mrs Pat Hayes

European Board of Ophthalmology

Denise Curtin represented the College at the EBO annual meeting in Lisbon and here she gives an update on the organisation, the annual diploma exam and the Irish links to it.

The Irish Medical Council and HSE MET have agreed with the ICO that trainees who wish to apply for Specialist Registration as Ophthalmologist must pass the EBO examination from January 2012. Trainees may apply in the 4th year of BST Training when they have been awarded the MRCSI.

This examination was started in 1995 by Professor Peter Eustace in Milan with 44 candidates and 48 examiners. In recognition of Peter's commitment to post graduate education and training and his tireless work, EBO President, Marko Howlina, introduced an award for trainers who are committed to Post Graduate Education and Training .

The first medal was awarded in 2011 to Professor Gisele Soubran a past President of EBO who works at the University of Paris East-Cretei.

Gisele trained in France and at the Wilmur Institute at Johns Hopkins and in the Institute of Ophthalmology in London. Peter was unable to attend the first medal presentation but Marie Hickey Dwyer spoke on his behalf to acknowledge the great honour that he felt having the award named after him. Peter believed passionately in the harmonisation of training in Europe. This year's recipient is Dr Jean Jacques de Lay who was President of EBO from 96 -98. This annual award is presented by the EBO President at the conferring ceremony in Paris which is held at the Palais de Congress at the Porte Maillot.

329 candidates sat the examination this year from 17 counties among them, 6 Irish candidates. 90% of candidates were successful on this occasion. This continuous improvement and harmonisation of medical

education and training is of great benefit to patient care.

This year four examiners travelled from Ireland; Marie Hickey Dwyer, Aoife Doyle, Gerard O Connor and myself.

A detailed exam syllabus has been prepared by Dr Catherine Cruzot Garcier and with invaluable help with translation from orthoptist Rachel O Connor we now have an English version of the document which has been sent for proof reading.

The current President of EBO is Marko Hawlina from Moorfields Eye Hospital in London and Peter Ringens is the Secretary. Dara Conlon and Lorraine O Hagan at Agenda Dublin provides the excellent administrative and secretarial support for the EBO.

Each of the Irish training units were inspected and approved by the EBO in 2007. Each unit must now apply for re-accreditation. Each EU member state has 2 representatives and the current Irish national representatives are Gerard O Connor and myself.



The successful Irish candidates pictured at this year's EBO exam in Paris in April – Marko Hawlina, Farahida Ibrahim, Kevin Kennelly, Sarah Moran, Denise Curtin

Diabetic Retinopathy Information Evening



Mark Cahill joins Anna Moran from Fighting Blindness and RTE's Ronan Collins at the DME information evening in the Alexandra Hotel.

The ICO joined with the NCBI, Fighting Blindness, Diabetes Ireland and the AOI to deliver information at a public session in the Alexandra Hotel on Thursday 31st May on managing diabetes and diabetic retinopathy. The event was hosted by RTE's Ronan Collins and attracted a large crowd who listened to talks from endocrinologist Seamus Sreenan, dietician Sinead Hanley and

Mark Cahill. It is hoped to extend this information into a more comprehensive awareness campaign next year.

AMD Awareness week will run again this coming September and the College is keen to fully support all planned activities and will be calling on all members to once again actively support this year's campaign



A large crowd gathers to listen to information on managing diabetes and diabetic retinopathy in the Alexandra Hotel.

EASDec report - Irish DMO pathway

The ICO annual meeting was followed on Saturday 26th & Sunday 27th May, by the annual meeting of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes, Eye Complications group. Many ICO delegates attended the extended event and contributed to the programme. David Keegan presented the results of a survey he had carried out amongst College members on the national DMO pathway.

While there is no established care pathway in Ireland, David reported that there is a series of photographic programmes arranged locally and some units still use high volume examination and there is one existing pilot population based programme in the Western region. While there is no national diabetic database yet, it is estimated that there are approx 191,000 patients with diabetes. There are 5,000 - 5,700 annual cases of DMO with 3,000 - 3,820 cases of treatable retinopathy.

Currently there are only 2 whole time equivalent medical retina specialists employed by the HSE with ten VR specialists incorporating DR care.

David concluded that the national screening programme must be rolled out without delay with clear referral pathways and treatment guidelines.

UEMS Section of Ophthalmology

Alison Blake represents the College at the UEMS and here she reports on the 67th Plenary Session of the Section of Ophthalmology held in Lisbon in June

The Union of European Medical Specialists is an EU wide representative body liaising with the EU Commission divided into sections by specialty. UEMS represents over 1.6 million medical specialists in all the different specialties. It also has strong links and relations with European Institutions (Commission and Parliament), the other independent European Medical Organisations and the European Medical / Scientific Societies. The UEMS has 39 Specialist Sections, which represent independently recognised specialties. They each created a European Board as a subgroup, in conjunction with the relevant European Society, with a view to defining European standards of medical education and training. They also contribute to the work of Multidisciplinary Joint Committees (MJC) which address fields of a multi-disciplinary nature. The Section of Ophthalmology encompasses the European Board of Ophthalmology which awards the EBO Diploma.

The current President (4 year term) is Constantino Bianchi from Italy, General Secretary Guy Aflalo (France) and Treasurer Eija Vesti from Finland.

The EU is seeking information on cataract surgery as this is the commonest eye

operation performed, a questionnaire re conditions and fees paid is to be sent to each country. The standardisation of specialisation is required by EU directive and the length of time is currently 4 years.

The Section of Ophthalmology accredits E-learning programmes and is seeking reviewers, each one hour program takes about two and a half hours to review. UEMS

representatives meet on a country by country basis in about 12 countries, The UK representative, Michele Beaconsfield, encouraged other countries to do likewise as much can be learned from the experiences of other specialties. She also addressed the rapidly increasing rate of blindness in Europe and the cost of this.

Fluorescein availability is a growing problem in continental Europe as the EU directive on medicinal products is enforced. In Ireland and the UK fluorescein has been considered a medicinal product for some time.

Cosmetic contact lenses are not regulated in Europe, and the infective keratitis rate is 12 times the rate with other contact lenses. This is of concern to the section which continues to press for regulation of sale.

The President, Constantino Bianchi, has two more years remaining in his term. The 2103 Plenary Session will be in Sofia, Bulgaria.



Launch of the National Corneal Transplant Registry

The new National Corneal Transplant Registry was launched on July 1st 2012. The audit registry has been successfully piloted at the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital and the Mater Hospital over the past 12 months and will now be extended to record data on all patients undergoing corneal transplantation in Ireland.

The aim of the registry is to provide long term and continuous assessment of measureable outcomes in corneal transplantation and to prospectively investigate the factors that influence them over a 10 year follow up period. Several countries, most notably Australia, the UK and Sweden, have been recording corneal transplant outcomes in this way for many years and have provided invaluable insights into a wide range of factors that influence the results of corneal transplantation, particularly factors predicting graft survival and success. In addition, an audit registry will enable us to evaluate advances and changes in clinical practice and to provide more accurate information to patients on the prognosis and expected outcomes of corneal transplantation.

In practice, audit forms will be completed at the time of corneal transplantation and at 2, 5 and 10 years post-operatively. The initial form will be sent with the transplant material and should be completed and returned with the other documentation required by the Eye Bank. Subsequent forms will be posted to consultant surgeons at the appropriate post-operative time point for completion and return to the Eye Bank. Data will be stored on a custom-designed database at the Eye Bank, which is located in St James' Hospital and is part of the Irish Blood and Tissue Service (IBTS). A meeting of contributing surgeons to discuss registry findings and other issues will be held at the annual Irish College of Ophthalmology meeting each year.

Questions or comments on the new Corneal Transplant Registry are welcomed via email to conorcsmurphy@rcsi.ie.
Conor Murphy

On behalf of the Corneal Transplant Registry Group which includes Weng Lee, Tim Fucher, Billy Power, Paul O'Brien, Sandra Shaw and Carmel Walsh.