Speakers debate hot topics at 2012 Cornea Day

The morning sessions of Cornea Day (co-sponsored by the Cornea Society and ASCRS) began with Graham D. Barrett, FRACO, Perth, Australia, declaring incision security during phaco “depends largely on the construction and the size of the incision and is unlikely to be dramatically improved by femtosecond technology.” Prof. Barrett added the technology “may not be ready for prime time.” Conversely, Robert J. Cionni, MD, Salt Lake City, said his group found the technology to be “superior in effective lens position predictability,” and in his practice, “63% of our patients are now opting for astigmatic correction” with the femtosecond cataract laser.

For the more advanced corneal surgeon, Michael Snyder, MD, Cincinnati, discussed his techniques for iridoprosthesis (none of the iris devices are approved for use in the U.S.); three manufacturers in Europe make the devices (Ophtec, Groningen, the Netherlands; Morcher, Stuttgart, Germany; and HumanOptics, Erlangen, Germany).

“Damaged irises can be successfully repaired, and when significant amounts of iris are missing, implants can be very helpful,” he said.

The second morning session featured a he said/she said format, with topics ranging from penetrating keratoplasty versus deep anterior lamellar keratoplasty to Descemet’s stripping endothelial keratoplasty versus Descemet’s membrane endothelial keratoplasty. Ocular surface transplant controversies discussed were limbal stem cell versus keratoprosthesis and pterygium surgery (conjunctival auto-graft versus amniotic membrane). In the latter discussions, Ed Holland, MD, Cincinnati, cited several advantages of ocular surface transplant, including its use in severe conjunctival disease. “It’s not a matter of which technique is better,” he said, “but which is best indicated for the patient.” Dr. Holland’s preference is to perform ocular surface transplantation first and then move to a keratoprosthesis if necessary.

Anthony Aldave, MD, Los Angeles, countered, saying the Boston keratoprosthesis “provides superior visual outcomes” to allogeneic keratolimbal transplantation and avoids immunosuppression issues.

With dry eyes and ocular surface disorders being top complaints from patients, the rush is on for a diagnostic test that will definitively diagnose the disease.

In one of the afternoon sessions, four clinicians debated what they felt would be the primary diagnostic test for dry eye in the next 5 years.

Presenters were tasked with looking beyond clinical presentations such as Schirmer’s test, tear breakup times, or conjunctival/corneal staining to biomechanical markers to diagnose ocular surface dysfunctions.

Richard S. Davidson, MD, Aurora, Colo., said the LipiView Ocular Surface Interferometer (TearScience, Morrisville, N.C.) allows for close monitoring of the lipid levels in tear film over time and can be combined with the LipiFlow treatment system for meibomian gland dysfunction.

“After a 20-second measurement time, it is able to quantify the lipid level in tear film,” Dr. Davidson said.

Reza Dana, MD, Boston, argued that the osmolarity test would reign in this arena.

Osmolarity testing with the TearLab Osmolarity System (TearLab Corp., San Diego) is currently available to test for subclinical dry eye.

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Dear Colleagues,

The 2012 Cornea Day at the ASCRS•ASOA Symposium & Congress was an astounding success, drawing a total of 1,500 delegates, the highest attendance ever registered for Cornea Day. Kudos to the Cornea Day Planning Committee, co-chaired by Terry Kim, MD, for a novel scientific program balanced with in-depth topics appealing to corneal specialists and which included sessions relevant to general ophthalmologists. Also at the ASCRS•ASOA Symposium & Congress, the Society's inaugural New Member and Young Physicians Dinner saw an overwhelming attendance over and above the available subscription number. Organized by our Young Physician Task Force, chaired by Barry Lee, MD, and with the aim to engage younger physicians, the evening provided the unique opportunity for younger corneal specialists to engage the more senior ones among us in lively discussions on the management of various corneal conditions that would not have been possible in a more formal setting. We will definitely do this again.

The Cornea journal continues to make significant strides. Authors seeking to submit manuscripts to the Cornea journal now have the option of online publication only. Under the most able stewardship of Alan Sugar, MD, who assumed his appointment as editor in chief of the journal early this year, by March 1, a short span of only 2 months, 90 manuscripts had been published online. In addition to the associate editors, Henry Perry, MD, Ivan Schwab, MD, and Joel Sugar, MD, we now have three assistant editors: Vincent de Luise, MD, H. Kaz Soong, MD, and Jayne Weiss, MD. I would like to express my appreciation to the new Editorial Board members: Daniel Bohringer, MD, Jose AP Gomes, MD, Albert Jun, MD, Eung Kweon Kim, MD, Shahzad Mian, MD, and Elmer Tu, MD.

I would like to announce a new concept that the Board is working on. Currently, young physicians who wish to pursue a corneal fellowship, or simply wish to enhance their corneal training with a clinical attachment, have no recourse other than consulting their senior corneal colleagues for advice or searching the various institutional websites for fellowship or observership opportunities. The Cornea Society, in conjunction with the Asia Cornea Society, aims to initiate a global Corneal Fellowship and Training Program Registry. Both societies are working toward creating and establishing a global registry that will serve as a comprehensive repository providing key information with regard to available corneal subspecialty observerships and fellowship training programs in ophthalmic institutions throughout the U.S. and the Asia-Pacific region, with the future potential of expanding this to other global regions, e.g., Europe and South America. This registry plans to include pertinent information such as the names of specific preceptors, length or duration of training, funding availability, and appropriate linkages to fellowship directors. Young members and ophthalmologists keen to pursue training in the corneal subspecialty can therefore look forward to an easily accessible and reliable information resource that is currently unavailable. We hope that this will further fulfill our Society’s aim to enhance education in our specialty. Watch this space.

Donald TH Tan, FRCS
President
A series of firsts for ACS

The 3rd Biennial Scientific Meeting of the Asia Cornea Society (ACS) to be held on Nov. 27-29, 2012, at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Hotel in Manila, Philippines, is set to explore ways for “Expanding the Realm of the Possible,” doing so with a world-class scientific program and by embarking on a series of firsts for the Society.

For the first time since the Society’s inception, the scientific meeting is being co-sponsored by the Cornea Society and the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) Symposia. Each organization will have a dedicated symposium within the main scientific program. Specifically, the Cornea Society is co-sponsoring the Advanced Keratoplasty Symposium, while AAO is co-sponsoring the Keratoconus & Ectasia Symposium.

As usual, the scientific program will feature the entire gamut of cornea-related topics, from the problem of corneal disease epidemiology in an expansive and diverse geographic region such as the Asia-Pacific, to eye banking in culturally variegated environments, to advances in corneal imaging and corneal refractive surgery, to the most advanced surgical techniques. Among the latter will be in-depth discussions of the latest forms of lamellar keratoplasty, highlighting procedures such as Descemet’s membrane endothelial keratoplasty (DMEK) and various approaches to Descemet’s stripping automated endothelial keratoplasty (DSAEK).

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Speakers continued from page 1

“Tear osmolarity correlates strongly and tightly with disease severity in dry eye disease, especially in mild to moderate disease,” he said.

Stephen C. Kaufman, MD, Minneapolis, touted the metalloproteinase-9 (MMP-9) inflammatory marker, a new objective test by Rapid Pathogen Screening Inc. (Sarasota, Fla.) that detects MMP-9 in tears. MMP-9 is a non-specific inflammatory mediator that is expressed by stressed epithelial cells. It has been correlated to be present in dry eye disease when inflammation is present and has a specificity of 92% and a sensitivity of 87%. Results take about 10 minutes.

Victor L. Perez, MD, Miami, talked about what he dubbed “epithelial irregularity factor” (EIF), a novel qualitative and quantitative criterion to diagnose dry eye that essentially is mapping the epithelium thickness using optical coherence tomography.

In another exciting afternoon session, sets of doctors faced off to debate hot issues in ophthalmology with a twist—they were asked to take the opposite stance they normally would hold.

In one debate, Jayne S. Weiss, MD, Detroit, argued that the epithelium in advanced surface ablation should be preserved and not discarded, while Perry S. Binder, MD, San Diego, disagreed.

“Alcohol is toxic to the epithelium,” Dr. Binder said. “Concentration and exposure time increase toxicity.” Mechanical disruption to the epithelial basement membrane damages basal cells, and surgeons get better results with the epithelium removed and discarded, Dr. Binder concluded.

The audience, which voted on each case, took Dr. Binder’s side, and Marian S. Macsai, MD, Glenview, Ill., good-humoredly presented him with a Cornea Day Oscar, as she did with others who won their debates.
Amidst this program, ACS is set to debut a series of awards designed to celebrate the work and achievements of exemplary ophthalmologists working in the field of cornea surgery today. These awards include the Asia Cornea Foundation Medalist Lecture, the Association of Eye Banks of Asia Award, and the Saiichi Mishima Award.

The Asia Cornea Foundation Medalist Lecture recognizes a cornea specialist renowned for his or her contributions to the field of cornea; the Association of Eye Banks of Asia Award is presented to ophthalmologists and non-ophthalmologists making substantial contributions to and impact on eye banking, recognizing their devotion to the promotion of eye banking and the elevation of standards; the Saiichi Mishima Award is given to a significant clinical or surgical research scientist for life-long contributions and achievements in outstanding cornea research in Asia. The main objective of these awards is to inspire younger generations working in the three pillars of healthcare in the field of cornea, clinical service, education, and research, with eye banking playing a significant role in ACS's work to alleviate corneal blindness in the region.

Finally, ACS will come full circle at this meeting, as the Society renews its memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Cornea Society. The Cornea Society was the very first society that ACS established an MOU with immediately following its foundation in 2007. ACS has since established a sound network of affiliation with 12 international and regional corneal and ophthalmological societies, making it a truly supranational society.

Visit www.asiacorneasociety2012manila.com for more information, including details for registration and the preliminary program. Registration and abstract submission are now open.
Friday, November 9, 2012
Chicago, IL
8:30 am-4:30 pm

Call for Submissions
Opens June 2012

Registration Opens
July 2012

Palmer House Hotel

Cornea Society/EBAA Fall Educational Symposium

www.corneasociety.org
www.restoresight.org

The Cornea Society
VISTA celebrates 20 years

By joining with the Cornea Society, VISTA founder Terrence O’Brien, MD, has big plans for the corneal group

When VISTA began 20 years ago in Sarasota, Fla., “it was a place for young corneal specialists who had an interest in research to get together and sit around discussing difficult cases or newer treatments or research,” said Terrence O’Brien, MD, professor of ophthalmology, Charlotte Breyer Rodgers Distinguished Chair, Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, Miami. Shortly thereafter, the group formalized and traditionally meets on the Sunday night of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO, Rockville, Md.) meeting.

“A vista is an outlook, a scene, a happy place,” Dr. O’Brien said, adding the group’s name was chosen specifically to represent those definitions. Over the years, the core group has expanded and grown by bringing fellows and students into the fold “to keep it young and vibrant,” Dr. O’Brien said. At this year’s ARVO meeting, more than 12 countries were represented at the VISTA dinner; overall there are about 200 members in the group representing every aspect of corneal science.

For cornea and external disease specialists, “VISTA at ARVO has been a highlight for the last 20 years,” said Michael W. Belin, MD, vice president, International Relations, the Cornea Society, Fairfax, Va. VISTA’s success “is a testament” to Dr. O’Brien and “the devotion of its young and aging attendees.” However, funding has become more problematic, and with ARVO’s move out of southern Florida to Seattle next year, it made sense for the organization to look beyond its borders, Dr. Belin said.

“Over the past year the Cornea Society and Dr. O’Brien have held discussions that led to the merging of VISTA and the Cornea Society,” Dr. Belin said. “The Society brings its meeting management expertise and looks to continue to work with Dr. O’Brien to ensure the continuation and growth of the VISTA educational program. Plans are already under way for Seattle. As VISTA now enters its 21st year, the strength of the Cornea Society should guarantee that the second 20 will be as rewarding as the first.”

Eduardo C. Alfonso, MD, professor and chairman, department of ophthalmology; Kathleen and Stanley J. Glaser Chair in Ophthalmology; and director, Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, also commended Dr. O’Brien’s efforts, noting “he was the driving force for starting VISTA and making sure it took place over the past 20 years. We all look forward to the support from the Cornea Society to continue the unique learning opportunities that this meeting provides to cornea specialists.”

Dr. O’Brien said the decision to join with the Cornea Society made logical sense, as both groups are active in having younger specialists join, and both groups encourage interaction among bench scientists and clinicians.

“No one holds anything back during the VISTA dinners—they are lively discussions and great, challenging cases,” Dr. O’Brien said. This year, for example, one of the case presentations was on chopsticks in the eye and another was on sexually transmitted diseases in the sclera. “Those of us who are more experienced are mentoring our younger colleagues; oftentimes throughout the years, the VISTA meeting has been their first chance to present a case in front of the experts,” he said.

Calling the VISTA dinner his personal highlight of ARVO, Dr. O’Brien said he’d like to see the group move beyond just a once-yearly dinner meeting to dinner meetings at the various Cornea Society events as well. Other plans down the road include launching a VISTA newsletter and possibly having the groups’ members collaborate on a clinical trial.

“I’m looking forward to the next 20 years and collaborating with the Cornea Society to continue to promote the insurgency of youth into our organizations,” Dr. O’Brien said.

During this year’s keynote address, Dr. O’Brien delivered a call to action to all VISTA scientists to actively seek better strategies for preventing tissue destruction during the course of microbial keratitis. He dedicated the address to Dan B. Jones, “the consummate clinician, brilliant teacher, and the Obi-Wan Kenobi of microbial keratitis,” as well as the many mentors, fellows, residents, and colleagues with whom he has worked over the years.

His hope is that the next 20 years will bring an enlightened approach with adjunctive therapies to prevent scarring, loss of transparency, and loss of vision from keratitis. He cited some early yet promising use of collagen crosslinking with ultraviolet light and riboflavin as an adjunctive measure to help in cases of recalcitrant keratitis. CS

Terrence O’Brien, MD
4th Annual CSB Advanced Eye Care Lecture Series

Bigger and the same world-class standard—that is the prediction for the 4th Annual Corneal Services Barbados Advanced Eye Care Lecture Series to be held this year at the Hilton Barbados on October 27.

Four experts from the U.S. will be in the island for the 1-day presentation hosted by Barbadian specialist Dr. Nigel Barker.

Dr. Gerald Zaidman, the leading pediatric corneal specialist in the U.S., and Dr. Kathryn Colby, a standout in the treatment of ocular tumors, will be the feature presenters at the October forum.

Also presenting will be certified orthoptist and ophthalmic medical technologist Sarah MacKinnon and surgical technologist Dawn Shelly.

The CSB Series attracts almost industry-wide participation from ophthalmologists, optometrists, opticians, technicians, nurses, and others in the profession from both the public and private sectors.

This year’s topics will include:
- Pediatric corneal disease and management
- Pediatric corneal transplant surgery
- The management of co-morbidities to include glaucoma, cataract, and amblyopia, the use of contact lenses and IOLs
- Alternatives to penetrating keratoplasty to include keratoprosthesis
- Management of ocular surface tumors in children
- Crosslinking for keratoconus

There will also be practical sessions for nurses and technicians.

Accommodations can be arranged for individuals and parties attending from overseas. Email targetmarket2002@yahoo.com or book your attendance by calling 246-422-8187 or 246-231-8187.

2012 AAO Mid-Year Forum tremendous success

The American Academy of Ophthalmology 2012 Mid-Year Forum took place on April 25-28 in Washington, D.C. Congressional Advocacy Day was a tremendous success with 400 eye MDs and DOs visiting members of Congress and their staff. The Cornea Society representation in the Advocacy Ambassador program included Dr. Bryan Lee, currently in fellowship training at Minnesota Eye Consultants. This year’s messages on the Hill included:
- Fair and stable Medicare reimbursement;
- Truth in advertising, empowering patients with support for the Congress Healthcare Truth and Transparency Act;
- Funding support for the NIH/NEI and the Department of Defense vision trauma research program.

This was followed by the Mid-Year Forum to discuss critical issues facing ophthalmology and to provide input to the Academy’s Board. The general session included discussions on physician profiling and demands for accountability; keeping innovation alive: balancing science, regulations, business, and ethics; and learning from the heart: status of medical registries. In addition, there were two hearings on leading the evolution of quality eyecare, and Femtosecond: a case study in physician payment.

This year’s Council meeting included a Council Advisory Recommendation to support development of a corneal graft registry. Although the recommendation was not adopted, the registry program being developed by the Academy will allow formation of a graft registry in the near future. Next year’s meeting is scheduled for April 10-13, and all members are encouraged to participate.
AUPO-FCC ARVO update

The AUPO Fellowship Compliance Committee (AUPO-FCC) met on May 6 during the ARVO meeting, being held for the last time at the Fort Lauderdale Convention Center. The AUPO-FCC was formed to ensure and maintain standards for ophthalmology fellowship training and to certify compliance of clinical fellowship programs in the U.S. and Canada. While participation is voluntary, programs achieving certification are distinguished in the SF Match listings as AUPO-FCC Compliant and serve and ensure a degree of quality training for the fellow.

The Cornea Society has been integral in creating the standards for cornea with and without refractive surgery programs with an impressive total of 43 programs participating. Michael Belin, MD, senior representative for Cornea, successfully completed his term as AUPO-FCC Review Committee chair and was announced as the new vice chair of the AUPO-FCC beginning July 1. Sonia Yoo, MD, was proposed and confirmed to the vacancy created by Dr. Belin’s elevation with current member Elmer Tu, MD, assuming the senior representative position. A strong commitment to open regular communication with fellowship program directors was discussed. The Cornea Society held a highly successful meeting with fellowship directors at the Federated Society Meeting prior to the 2011 AAO meeting in Orlando, which will be continued at this fall’s meeting in Chicago. Please plan to attend.

SITraC

The Italian Society for Corneal Transplantation (SITraC) holds its annual congress on the last weekend in February. In 2013, Prof. Alessio and Prof. Sborgia will be in charge of organizing the meeting in Bari, the main city of Apulia. The program will include:

a. Instructional courses (on Thursday, February 21) on lamellar keratoplasty, crosslinkage, corneal infections, corneal dystrophies, eyelids and cornea, as well as ocular surface disease.
Update on Cornea, journal of the Cornea Society

The journal acknowledges and thanks retiring board members Denise De Freitas, Henry Edelhauser, Gary Foulks, Joseph Fruch-Pery, M. Christina Kenney, Michael Lemp, Maureen Maguire, Denis O’Day, and James Reidy. All have served for many years, providing expertise and guidance to the journal.

We welcome the new board members: Daniel Bohringer (Freiburg), Jose AP Gomes (Sao Paulo), Albert Jun (Baltimore), Eung Kweon Kim (Seoul), Shahzad Mian (Ann Arbor), Donald Tan (Singapore), and Elmer Tu (Chicago).

The structure of the journal board has been changed to handle the increasing volume of manuscripts. The executive board has been replaced by an increase in the number of editors with manuscript management responsibilities. In addition to the associate editors, Henry Perry, Ivan Schwab, and Joel Sugar, we now have three assistant editors. They are Vincent De Luise, H. Kaz Soong, and Jayne Weiss. We welcome their help.

The journal is decreasing its backlog of manuscripts awaiting print. This has required a decrease in the rate of accepted papers. We hope to soon be able to offer an option of online only publication, which may allow more rapid publication. As always, we welcome communications regarding the progress of the journal. We also greatly appreciate the service of the hundreds of reviewers who are critical for the evaluation of scientific contributions.

—Alan Sugar, MD, editor in chief
What’s new with Cornea?
Mobile access and journal updates

As a member of the Cornea Society, you receive a subscription to the journal Cornea, which includes a print copy of the journal in addition to online access at www.corneajrnl.com. But did you know that you can stay up to date on the latest research from your phone? Using any internet-enabled mobile device, you can browse the journal content wherever and whenever you choose, making it even easier for you to stay informed with the latest research from Cornea.

Content anytime, anywhere
You do not need to rely on the print issue to learn about professional advances in your field. You can browse content when you are away from your computer, even waiting for the subway. You can access the journal content in many ways and ask that it be delivered to your inbox based on specific topics you have elected. All of the content delivery methods below are available to you as a member of the Cornea Society. Please try some of these the next time you are looking up a new surgical technique or the latest treatment options for a condition.

Journal website: Read current and past article content online in HTML or PDF format at www.corneajrnl.com. Don’t forget that you can access articles before they are published in a print issue via the “Publish Ahead of Print” section of the website. These articles have not yet appeared in a print issue and therefore represent the newest findings in the field.

Mobile access: You can browse journal content while on the go via any internet-enabled mobile device, such as your Blackberry or iPhone. Need to access important research or clinical information between patients? Navigate your mobile web browser to the journal website and browse the journal in the palm of your hand. Anywhere you have internet access you can effortlessly get ahold of the information you need, when and where you need it.

iPad app: The Journals@LWW iPhone app brings Cornea right to your iPhone, iPod Touch, or iPad. Quickly and easily browse through tables of contents and review abstracts. The application is free. Download it from the App Store in iTunes and then add the journal Cornea and any other journals you are interested in within the app.

Email alerts: Sign up for alerts by logging in to your account at www.corneajrnl.com and clicking on “My Account” at the top of the screen. Click on the tab “eTOC and Alerts.” You can choose the alerts that are of most interest to you. For example, choose to receive emails whenever new issues are published or a new article is posted. Additionally, you can choose specific keywords and be alerted when new content is published on those topics, or you can ask to be alerted when a particular article is cited in another journal. Customize your alerts and have the content you are interested in delivered right to your inbox.

Updates to the journal online
In May, a number of exciting new features were introduced to the Cornea website, www.corneajrnl.com. These updates provide enhanced keyword searching and more ways to view, sort, and filter search results. New features that you will see on the site include:

- Abstract view in search results: You will now be able to view article abstracts along with your search results. With the addition of this feature, you can scroll the results and view the abstract, making it easier for you to determine which articles you are most interested in reading.
- Search results menu bar: The menu bar appearing at the top of the search results has been expanded to include the Actions, View, and Sort options. You will be able to easily sort by title, citation, or abstract, or use the Actions menu to add selected articles to favorites, email a colleague, or export bibliographic information.

We hope you enjoy these additional features and that they make searching for content in the journal easier than ever before. CS

Cornea Society News is published by the Cornea Society. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Cornea Society. Mention of products or services does not constitute endorsement. To submit comments, suggestions, or news, contact Gail Reggio at GReggio@CorneaSociety.org.

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BARI, February 21-22-23, 2013

XVII National Congress
Italian Society of Corneal Transplantation

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Congress Venue: Sheraton Nicolaus Hotel - Via Cardinale A. Ciasca, 27 - Bari, Italy

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Cornea 2012: Pushing Surgical Boundaries, Professional Development and Popular Opinion
In conjunction with The Cornea Society
Saturday, November 10, from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM
Chicago, IL

Program Directors:
Anthony J Aldave MD
Natalie A Afshari MD
Kathryn A Colby MD PhD

Join us in Chicago for Subspecialty Day

Your registration for Cornea Subspecialty Day includes:
• Flexibility to float between all Subspecialty Day meetings on Saturday:
  Glaucoma, Oculofacial Plastic Surgery, Pediatric Ophthalmology,
  Refractive Surgery, Retina and Uveitis.
• Access to the Joint Meeting Exhibit Hall on Saturday

Registration Opens:
Academy Members: June 27
Nonmembers: July 11

CME Accreditation
The American Academy of Ophthalmology is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

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