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INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL SCIENCES ACADEMY

July - September 2010
Vol. 23 No. 3

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PRESIDENT WRITES

Dear Fellows and Members

India has led the world in ophthalmology from historic and mythological times. According to Hindu mythology, Kannappa Nayanar plucked his eyes and placed it in the bleeding socket of Lord Siva thus setting the stage for the first eye transplant. In today's age "*you name an organ we transplant it*"; it is surprising that the first whole eye transplant has yet to be done. The ancient Indian surgeon Sushrutha is credited with doing the earliest cataract couching treatment.

While ophthalmology has advanced by leaps and bounds over the last two decades, we still don't have an answer to many diseases. The single most significant advance has been implantation of an artificial lens after cataract surgery which helped in rehabilitating patients and helping them lead a life without dependency. Cataract surgery is the single largest volume surgery performed worldwide. Here are a few problems we need to address. The software era has brought with it '*Computer Vision Syndrome*' causing dry and tired eyes. School eye screening programs have opened a Pandora's box; 10-12% children suffer from correctable blindness, myopia and squint. The increased incidence of diabetes has resulted in increase in eye-related problems like diabetic retinopathy which need expert hands and sophisticated equipment. Genetically transmitted diseases due to consanguinity are still prevalent in rural India for which we need health educators. Corneal blindness is a treatable disease; we need to create more awareness for corneal donation and transplant. There is need for amendments in current law regarding harvesting, so that it can be done at an appropriate time.

In the last five years there has been a corporate invasion in ophthalmology. It has helped to provide sophisticated treatment in the big cities. Focus is needed on preventing blindness occurring due to injury at work place, in the farming sector and in children playing with sharp objects. Commendable work has been done by the government and NGOs towards the eradication of treatable blindness but there is still more to be done. May our eyes remain open so that we can help solving above problems.



K. Jagadeesan

Dr. K. Jagadeesan
President, IMSA

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