

Report by Dr Suria Sudhakaran: APAO International Fellowship Program 2017 *

I, Dr Suria Sudhakaran, MD, was selected for the International Fellowship Program by the Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology at Jules Stein Eye Institute, UCLA for the year of 2017.

After discussing convenient dates with the institute, I started the program at Jules Stein on April 5, 2017 and was there till June 30, 2017. On my arrival, a detailed tour of the department with orientation about the clinical outpatient department and operation theatres was given.

I was given a schedule to be followed and was directed to attend clinical and surgical rotations with all the glaucoma consultants at the institute. My rotations at the institute were under the mentorship of Dr Joseph Caprioli, Chief of the Glaucoma Division at Jules Stein Eye Institute.

During my postings, I followed the consultants and the glaucoma fellows and observed clinical evaluation, diagnostic tests, and treatment decisions. I actively participated in the clinical discussions and had the opportunity to clarify my doubts. I also was allowed to evaluate patients under the supervision of the consultants. I also had the opportunity to discuss in detail and clear all my doubts regarding clinical correlation of various diagnostic tests like visual field analysis and anterior and posterior segment OCT and HRT.

In the operating room, I could observe various glaucoma and cataract surgeries. The glaucoma surgeries I was privileged to observe included the following:

- Trabeculectomy
- Revision of trabeculectomy
- Glaucoma drainage devices like Ahmed Glaucoma Valve
- Tube revision
- iStent
- CyPass
- InnFocus microshunt

Through the course of this fellowship I have gained sufficient knowledge on the medical, laser, and surgical management of glaucoma.

I also participated and was given the opportunity to be involved in research activities at the institute under the guidance of Dr Caprioli. I regularly attended the clinical research meetings held at the department and was actively involved in collecting and organizing data for two clinical research projects at the institute.

I was involved in the following projects at UCLA:

1. To determine the difference in progression in visual field loss in primary open angle glaucoma with and without acquired pit of the optic nerve;
2. A novel index to define the rate of visual field changes in glaucoma.

I was also part of a surgical video editing project at the institute in collaboration with the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

During my stay at Jules Stein Eye Institute, I attended wet lab training sessions, which included didactic lectures followed by hands on training on artificial eyes. I had the opportunity to attend wet lab training sessions on iStent and trabectome. I also participated in the wet lab training session on endoscopic cytophotocoagulation organized by Endo Optiks.

I attended weekly glaucoma conferences organized at the department, which showcased various ongoing glaucoma research projects at the institute and also seminars by various in-faculty members as well as guest faculty from other institutes.

I regularly attended weekly grand rounds, organized by various departments of Jules Stein, which had clinical case discussions and orations by eminent guest faculty in ophthalmology from across the country.

I had the opportunity to attend ASCRS 2017 while I was in Los Angeles and also attended the 'UCLA Stein Eye Institute Clinical and Research Seminar and 50th Anniversary Celebration.'

Throughout my fellowship I had the opportunity to attend clinical and surgical rotations with Dr Joseph Caprioli, Dr Simon K Law, Dr Anne L Coleman, Dr JoAnn Giacconi, and Dr Kouros Nouri Mahdavi. It was a great learning experience to have been associated with the world-renowned faculty.

The clinical glaucoma fellows at the department, Laura Vickers, MD, and Nathaniel Sears, MD, were extremely knowledgeable and a pleasure to work with. The research fellows and the attending staff at the institute have been very helpful, cordial, courteous, and professional.

Janet Chong, the glaucoma practice manager, and Bobbi Ballenberg, the clinical manager, were of huge help in getting me acquainted with the other staff and also in coordinating my rotations in the department.

I had the opportunity to learn immensely about the latest and the best practices in glaucoma along with the opportunity to be a part of the glaucoma research team at the institute.

Apart from academics, I'm extremely happy to have been able to explore one of the liveliest cities in the world: Los Angeles. The cost of living in this city is extremely high and it would be helpful for future fellows to have the fellowship amount raised enough as to make the stay affordable. I would request APAO and the fellow organizations to take this aspect into consideration for future fellows.

It was a pleasure having an opportunity to be part of this prestigious institute. I look forward to implementing the knowledge imparted to me through this

fellowship in educational and clinical usefulness for the glaucoma practice in my home country. I will be imparting the knowledge and skills to the trainees at the academic institutions I'm affiliated with and also will be conducting instruction courses at a national level ophthalmology conference: All India Ophthalmology Conference 2018. I would take this opportunity to thank the Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology for this wonderful opportunity. I hope this international collaboration with prestigious institutes and APAO in global education continue for the benefit of widening the horizons and opportunities for young ophthalmologists across the world.

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