P26-A125 **DONATION MEDICINE: A CHANGE OF PARADIGM IN PROCURING OCULAR TISSUES FOR TRANSPLANTATION**

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**Purpose** Geographical imbalance in cornea supply is a key feature of global eye banking. Most countries of South Asia particularly India suffer from donor cornea shortage which limits the number of keratoplasties, thereby aggravating the already high burden of removable blindness. The purpose of the project is to identify and cross-pollinate best practices from two leading eye banking institutions in India and Germany, and thereby improve service delivery of both systems. The project is supported by the GIZ Hospital Partnerships funding program on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) with a co-financing by the Else Kröner-Fresenius Foundation (EKFS). It started in 2021 and will last up to 2023.

**Methods** A joint expert group from both organisations conducted a series of workshops to identify the areas of intervention and specific practices to be introduced at the Indian partner’s region. The overall increase in cornea collections and transplants, documented systemic improvement measures and research output were defined as the key outcomes.

**Results** Interim results are presented here. Two interventions identified were expansion of catchment area of cornea collection in India, and improved information management system to monitor the progress and efficiency of the collection centres. Under the former intervention, the hub-and-spoke model from the German partner was introduced to the most populous state of India through establishment of two new cornea collection centres (spokes) for Hospital based Cornea collections. In six months these centres have supplied 79 donor corneas leading to 63 transplants at the hub. Under the latter intervention, the specifications of a baseline data capture and operations management system which can be used in low resource settings are being developed.

**Conclusion** The initiative has shown how best practice from one geography can be adapted and successfully implemented in another geographic region. Furthermore, the public knowledge resources created in the project can be used by other eye banks to advance eye banking in their respective countries. The results were assessed by an interdisciplinary team, composed of eye bank and healthcare personnel, regulators and experts in medical humanities.

**Results** In 2021, in light of 2944 non-oppositions to donation (opting out system), 891 consultations of the national SIT donor registry were performed (Sistema Informativo Trapianti), with 2551 clinical charts reviewed, 4332 related phone consultations performed, and 2032 nasopharyngeal swabs for SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid tested; as a consequence, 2213 condolences and gratitude letters were sent to donor families, of which 57% (1269) conveyed the outcome of donation, along with 115 gratitude letters sent in instances of the non-recovery. 24 families requested, and were granted, the opportunity to visit the eye bank.

**Conclusion** A consensus was reached on the evidence that the term ‘Procurement’ has obvious limitations in the long term nurturing and maintenance of the motivation of the eye bank and healthcare personnel. As a consequence, the concept of ‘Donation Medicine’ was implemented to define and develop the activities related to the promotion of donation, the recovery of ocular tissues for transplantation, and internal/external relations with healthcare personnel, thus changing the meaning of ‘Procurement’, from a process at the end of a life to the realization of a new pathway of care that takes into account both donor families and recipients. Donation medicine begins with the re-opening of the donor clinical chart, the interaction with donor relatives and the recovery of a precious gift for use in the restoration of sight of patients.

**LIVERPOOL RESEARCH EYE BIOBANK-OUR EXPERIENCE OF EXPANDING TO COLLECT FROM LIVING DONORS**

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**Purpose** The Liverpool Research Eye Biobank (LREB) collects tissue for researchers who wish to study a wide range of ophthalmic conditions and develop new and more effective treatments. Historically the LREB has collected whole globes and conjunctiva from cadaveric donors but in 2021 we expanded to start collecting tissues from living donors who were undergoing ophthalmic surgery in the St Paul’s Eye Unit in Liverpool. The aim was to provide tissue and fluid samples from patients with specific eye disease to research projects and create a bank of ophthalmic samples that can be provided to future research projects. Here we reflect on our experience after a year of collections.

**Methods** The clinical team discuss donation with patients during the pre-op appointment. Consent is taken on the day of surgery using an electronic consent form available on PENS. Samples are taken according to the patient’s consent preference and then stored appropriately within a fridge/freezer close to theatre. Samples are then transferred for processing to the University of Liverpool (UoL). Fluids such as aqueous and vitreous are preserved at -80°C. The majority of ocular tissue collected is preserved by fixating in 10% neutral buffered formalin then transferred to 70% ethanol for long term storage. On request samples have been preserved using alternative methods such as snap freezing in liquid nitrogen. All samples are logged using a laboratory information management system.

**Abstracts**

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